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# ***Scenes from Goethe's Faust:*** **Schumann's Grand Opus**

Daniel Sean Croft

M.A.

2004

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## Abstract

The course of Schumann's career seems to lead in an almost predetermined manner to the composition of the oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as the culmination and summation of all the work that had preceded it, both musically and philosophically, a compositional climax that portrays the characteristics of the theoretical genre of the Grand Opus. This thesis explores a single example from each of the three genres that were most important to Schumann's career – piano composition, song and symphony – and examines how these three works – the C major *Fantasie* Op.17, *Frauenliebe und –Leben* Op.42, and the Second Symphony Op.61 respectively – exemplify the hallmarks of Schumann's creative philosophy through three compositional elements – Schumann's use of genre, the philosophy of the fragment, and a new found historicism and appreciation of tradition – elements that were rooted in the broader context of the Romantic period and its distinct system of values and beliefs. The manifestation, development, and culmination of these three genres and three compositional elements in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* provides a perspective from which to view the oratorio, in relation to the composer's previous works, as Schumann's Grand Opus.

# ***Scenes from Goethe's Faust:*** **Schumann's Grand Opus**

Daniel Sean Croft

M.A. Thesis  
M.A. Thesis Supervisor Dr. M. Spitzer  
Music Department  
University of Durham

2004

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## Abbreviations

*19cM Conf.*: Nineteenth-Century Music: Selected Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference (Zon, Bennett (ed.), Samson, Jim (ed.))

*MaA*: Music and Aesthetics (Bent, Ian (ed.))

*MaHM*: Robert Schumann: The Man and His Music (Walker, Alan (ed.))

*MaL*: Music and Letters

*MaNc*: Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century, Volume II: Hermeneutic Approaches (Stevens, John (general ed.) Huray, Peter le (general ed.), Bent, Ian (ed.))

*NcM*: 19<sup>th</sup>-century Music

*NZfM*: Neue Zeitschrift für Musik

*SaHW*: Schumann and His World (Todd, Larry R. (ed.))

*SaS*: Schumann: A Symposium (Abraham, Gerald (ed.))

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## Introduction: The Grand Opus

The achievements of Robert Schumann's career seem to culminate in his oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as a summation of all the work that had preceded it, both musically and philosophically. Because of this, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* may be regarded as Schumann's Grand Opus. John Daverio was perhaps the first to realise the importance of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* in Schumann's output and it was his description of this oratorio as an encyclopaedia of genres, a matter discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1, that was refined, developed and expanded into the concept of the Grand Opus that forms the central concept of this thesis.

The Grand Opus is a theoretical genre of composition that is as individual to each composer as each composer is an individual among his peers. Appearing towards the close of a composer's life, it is both the culmination and the capstone of a musical career, bringing together all the disparate elements of the artist's particular oeuvre within a single summative work. Embodying the philosophical, theological, critical, extra-musical, and, of course, compositional beliefs of a composer, the Grand Opus contains within its span the achievements of an entire artistic life. As such the Grand Opus is typically of a grandiose scale unheralded by the composer's previous works, both formally and instrumentally, calling upon an orchestra of relatively great proportions to communicate a sweeping structural essay of extensive breadth as an exhibition of the veteran composer's ability to master both large-scale forms and large-scale forces simultaneously. Within the boundaries of the imposing expanse of the Grand Opus is to be found an admixture of the genres with which the composer had previously wrestled with and explored, a fusion of genres that dominated his earlier creative concern as individual categories now housed as a great amalgamation



under the overarching mantle of a single genre-transcending piece. Thus symphonic, vocal, chamber, pianistic and operatic styles may find themselves not only adjacent and juxtaposed, but also intermixed and merged as new and perhaps unique forms of generic expression. Musical genres, however, are not the only forms of art to be found in the breadth of the Grand Opus as the composer's theological and philosophical convictions are manifested in the allusion, integration, and presentation of poetic or liturgical texts through both instrumental and vocal means. Finally, the Grand Opus contains an element of less intrinsic artistic worth than those previously mentioned. Typically, as one of the concluding masterwork of a composer's career, the Grand Opus will also express a desire for acceptance by a wide audience, a longing for a triumphant blaze of glory with which to end a career. As such, these summative works will also often incorporate populist sentiments on some level, an attempt to find favour with the masses as a reassurance for the composer that he shall not be forgotten now his time is ending, that he may conclude his opus with the clangour of an appreciative audience ringing in his ears. The Grand Opus then, is the image of the pyramid capstone, the summit and the zenith, it gathers the lines and progressions of all previous labours, now foundation and support, within itself and completes the construction of a vast and imposing monument: the monument of a composer's career.

Before exploring Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* in this context I shall examine two isolated examples of the Grand Opus genre to provide a perspective from which to judge Schumann and his oratorio. The Grand Opuses we shall investigate as a prelude to our main concern are Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Mahler's Eighth symphony.

Beethoven's Ninth seems to encapsulate the concept of the Grand Opus with the incorporation into a symphony of an overtly populist chorale finale based upon a Schiller text stripped of all controversial political elements and reshaped as a pantheistic yearning for an idealised 'Brotherhood of Man'. The undoubted simplification inherent in a symphonic finale that bases its hard won conclusion upon a theme fused from the genres of the folk song and liturgical chorale, the latter of which was a genre created for the mass expression of religious devotion, suggests that Beethoven aimed for a glorious and crowd-pleasing culmination to his Ninth Symphony, and perhaps his career, before the private, introspective works of the composer's late style, a view shared by Mendelssohn who in 1841 wrote after a performance of the Ninth, "The grandiose D minor Symphony, the most wonderful, most mysterious, and most subjective work by Beethoven, closed the concert as (in a sense) it closed the artistic life of the great, eternal master" (Mendelssohn in Cook 1993: ix). This judgment is reinforced by the generic combination that shapes the Ninth as a whole, a combination that far transcends the addition of a devotional choral finale to the secular and instrumental symphony. Michael Tulsa summarises the compositional breadth of Beethoven's Ninth and specifically the choral finale:

the choral finale is an encyclopaedic compendium of media, topics, meters, textures, styles, and genres, which seemingly embodies within a single movement the full range of expressive and technical possibilities of Beethoven's compositional universe, and thereby validates and unites highly disparate musical domains that normally are, in Schiller's words, strictly separated by fashion: instrumental and vocal, vernacular and cultivated, European and exotic, secular and sacred, pagan and Christian, improvisation and *res facta*, and so forth (Tulsa 1998: 114-5).

Meanwhile, the objective size and grandeur of Beethoven's Ninth is beyond doubt with its remarkable length of around an hour and a quarter, the triumphant finale of which is communicated symbolically through the achievement of a joyous D major over the pessimistic tonic D minor, matched only by the vast performing forces

it requires. Meanwhile, the philosophical and theological elements of Beethoven's Grand Opus are manifested in Maynard Solomon's appreciation of the work's last movement:

A multiplicity of drives converge in the Ninth Symphony's finale – for a visionary D major to overcome the power of D minor; for a theme adequate to represent “Joy, divine spark of the Gods”; for Elysium, with its promise of brotherhood, reconciliation, and eternal life; for a recovery of the Classical ideal of humanity united with Nature. And more: for a Deity who transcends any particularisations of religious creed; for a fusion of Christian and Pagan beliefs, a marriage of Faust and Helen (Solomon in *NcM X*: 15-16).

Thus we see in Beethoven's Ninth ‘Choral’ Symphony the Grand Opus incarnate, summarising and concluding the achievements of the composer's career in a grand and popular manner while simultaneously exuding the composer's philosophical and theological perspective.

A work that often bears detailed comparison with Beethoven's Ninth, and with good reason, is Mahler's Eighth Symphony (1906-7). This, the composer's most public and celebratory work, encapsulated Mahler's pantheistic and eternally optimistic religious views in a message of universal love communicated through a consciously simplified manner to appeal to a grand audience. A purposefully diatonic and ‘innocent’ harmonic vocabulary characterises Mahler's Eighth Symphony, an approach developed from previous works, such as the childlike vision of paradise of *Das himmlische Leben* in the finale of his Fourth Symphony or the ‘naïve’ orchestration of *Morgenglocken* in the Third Symphony. The two movements of Mahler's Eighth Symphony are based upon two widely disparate texts, the ancient sacred hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the final scene from Part 2 of Goethe's Romantic and secular *Faust* to reflect Mahler's message of an all-inclusive divine love. The embodiment of the Eighth Symphony as an expression of Mahler's personal theological and philosophical beliefs and the purposeful simplification of the work for

the popular consumption of this message mark two important aspects of the Grand Opus.

The immense performing force needed for Mahler's Eighth Symphony resulted in its popular name of 'The Symphony of a Thousand', a seemingly exaggerated title that actually underestimates the legion musicians deployed at the work's premiere, albeit only by thirty (an orchestra of 171, a choir of 858 and Mahler as conductor), while at around an hour and twenty minutes of music, the great scale of the symphony's orchestra is matched only by its length. The two massive movements that comprise the symphony are organised not only by their two independent texts, but also by a symbolic tonal system. The tonic of E major is not achieved at the conclusion of Mahler's Eighth as Eb major completes the work. Donald Mitchell offers an explanation of this tonal relationship: "E, after which the work (and mankind) aspires, represents the unattainable and E flat what realistically can be attained, i.e. recognition of what leads us onward and upward, which is itself a triumph over doubt and scepticism, while necessarily falling a step (a semitone!) short of final enlightenment" (Mitchell 1985: 576-7).

The view of the Eighth Symphony as a culmination of Mahler's compositional career, despite his Ninth and Tenth Symphonies, can be observed through a comparison of the Eighth with the song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde*. The two main genres of Mahler's career were the symphony and the song, two genres that he often merged into a single work as "for Mahler the song was often the vehicle for experimentation while the symphony provided a flexible medium within which traditional and progressive trends could be contrasted if not reconciled" (Williamson 1983: 29). In the Eighth Symphony and *Das Lied* we find, almost as two contrary conclusions to his earlier experiments, two vastly divergent poles of Mahler's

song/symphony synthesis in these two chronologically adjacent works (Eighth Symphony 1906-7, *Das Lied* 1907-8). Where the Eighth Symphony was a simplified and populist work, public in its approach and presented on a grand scale, *Das Lied* was a song-cycle of great complexity and technical achievement, intimately connected with Mahler's personal life and, in comparison to 'The Symphony of a Thousand', relatively compact.

In Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Mahler's Eighth Symphony we have two fine examples of the theoretical genre of the Grand Opus. In this thesis I will show how, in exactly the same manner and by the same criterion, Schumann's oratorio<sup>1</sup> *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* may be included alongside these illustrious works as the embodiment of the Grand Opus. In each of the three following chapters I will explore an individual example from each of the three genres that were most important to Schumann's career, individual compositions that also exemplify the hallmarks of Schumann's creative philosophy that was rooted in the broader context of the Romantic period and its distinct values and beliefs. I shall then establish the manner in which these three genres and various philosophies manifest and culminate in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, thus viewing the previous works as rehearsal and preparation for this overarching Grand Opus. Chapter One concerns Schumann's piano compositions, and specifically the C major *Fantasie* Op.17 and how this early work embodied a prototype of generic combination that assumed full form as an embodiment of Schlegel's *Roman* genre in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*. In Chapter Two we move on to the genre of the *Lied*, exemplified by *Frauenliebe und -Leben*

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<sup>1</sup> Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* justifies the generic title oratorio on the basis that it is an extended musical setting of a culturally significant text (the nineteenth-century oratorio was no longer the sole domain of the sacred) performed as an unstaged concert piece with dramatic and contemplative elements. Also the composer referred to the work as an oratorio in his letters of October 1844 to Eduard Krüger. Some of the few points against the classification of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as an oratorio are the lack of a narrative element in the work and its three-part, as opposed to two-part, structure.

Op.42, and the philosophy of the narrative fragment, an originally literary formal technique that Schumann employed in his own fragmentation of Goethe's original *Faust* and in doing so united the Romantic philosophical idea of the fragment with that of the sublime to form the 'fragmented sublime'. Finally, Chapter Three concludes this thesis with an exploration of Schumann's Second Symphony Op.61 as an exemplar of his symphonic works and also an incarnation of the composer's critical and philosophical approach to tradition and historicism revealed in his use of the Bachian chorale in his symphonic finale. Therefore I will approach the three chapters of my thesis as individual studies of several of the separate, and yet related and overlapping, distinctions of the Grand Opus: a culmination of all previous generic categories within an overriding work, the extra-musical influence of literature on Schumann's compositional practice, and an embodiment of the composer's personal critical and philosophical views. First however, I shall sketch a broad framework of how *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* may be viewed as Schumann's Grand Opus in a manner similar to that adopted for Beethoven and Mahler above.

Composed over almost a decade from 1844-53, the creation of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* spans a major portion of the composer's life. Standing at over two hours in length and requiring an orchestra, full chorus, and a full fifteen soloists including the characters of Faust, Gretchen, Mephistopheles, and a host of minor roles from the Evil Spirit of Scene 3 to the holy anchorite Pater Ecstaticus, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* is instrumentally and structurally among the largest of Schumann's compositions with Daverio describing it as "perhaps Schumann's grandest [composition] in form and most highly differentiated in content" (Daverio 1997: 367). The immense chronological length of Schumann's oratorio is organised by a symbolic tonal scheme that reflects the progression of events and ideas of Goethe's vast play, a

matter explored further in Chapter Two. The populist element of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* is to be found in Schumann's choice of the oratorio, a genre associated with the mass expression of religious devotion, for his setting of *Faust*. However, by basing his oratorio on Goethe's secular play and performing it in the context of the concert hall, Schumann contributes to the reformation of the nineteenth-century oratorio as a mass expression of *cultural* devotion, and a specifically German culture, a topic further considered in Chapter Three. In the context of the concentration of Schumann's career upon the private forms of the piano and song cycles, (with the public genres restricted to only four completed symphonies, two operas and two other oratorios), by choosing the communal oratorio genre for a work of such great length and performing forces, setting the vastly popular and influential Goethe's *Faust*, and concluding with a grand and triumphant finale, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* displays an unusually strong populist element.

Schumann's choice of *Faust* as the basis of his oratorio libretto and the composer's treatment of his poetic source reflects a great deal upon the exploration of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as Schumann's Grand Opus. His manipulation of this vastly significant play is a direct embodiment of the composer's creative and critical philosophies that poetic sources for musical compositions must be of significant literary value and that in setting an original text a composer must act primarily as a translator of artistic spirit. Therefore Schumann's idiosyncratically faithful translation of *Faust*, a play whose themes and ideas held an overwhelming influence on the arts of the nineteenth-century, can be viewed as the pinnacle of Schumann's literary aspirations. It was not, however, only *Faust's* eminence as a literary masterpiece that drew Schumann to set the play as the libretto for his Grand Opus. The work also strongly reflected Schumann's own personal philosophy: "Schumann's religiosity was



devoid of dogmatism. In a self-characterisation written in 1830, he described himself as “religious, but without religion”; according to Wasielewski, this description held into the 1850s” (Daverio 1997: 471). This self-characterisation is mirrored in Goethe’s emphasis in *Faust* upon the transcendent aspect of divinity and its manifestation in Nature rather than the human interpretation of God in organised religion. Meanwhile Goethe’s salvation of an essentially sinful Faust echoes Schumann’s theological world-view, as revealed by the composer’s choice of literary sources for his dramatic works (*Scenes from Goethe’s Faust*, *Genoveva*, *Manfred*, *Die Paradies und die Peri*, and *Rose der Pilgerfahrt*) which are united by the common literary theme of redemption. Therefore we may observe that Goethe’s *Faust* was not only the culmination of Schumann’s literary aspirations in his musical career, but also embodied his philosophical and theological views, thus fulfilling a further aspect of our definition of the Grand Opus.

Finally, Schumann’s *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* appears to be the climax of a seemingly ordered progression through the various genres available to the nineteenth-century composer. His apparent “generic system” is remarkable for the manner in which Schumann comprehensively moved from piano music to song, symphony, chamber, oratorio, opera, dramatic, and church music. Of course there are individual works that stand outside this system, the most obvious of which is Schumann’s grand oratorio *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* that stretches over the final decade of the composer’s career and includes instrumental and vocal, popular and intellectual, public and private, sacred and secular genres. Daverio describes *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* as “an endeavour that coloured much of his work for nearly a decade and that came close to providing a capstone on his conquest of musical genres” (Daverio 1997: 303). I will be arguing in Chapter One not only that Schumann’s oratorio *was* the

capstone of his generic system, thus fulfilling a single aspect of the Grand Opus, but also throughout the thesis as a whole that *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* was actually a capstone for Schumann's entire career as an example of the Grand Opus genre, as defined above.

In its culmination and summarisation of Schumann's generic system, its great length and orchestral size, assertions of theological and philosophical perspectives through an eminent Romantic literary work, late position in the composer's output and relatively popular appeal in the context of Schumann's previous work, the oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* may be considered as Schumann's Grand Opus in the same manner in which Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony may be considered as theirs.

## Chapter One: Genre and the *Fantasie*

Schumann's C major *Fantasie* can be seen as an experiment in employing genre as a tool of communication. The use of genre in this manner is, however, a relatively primitive prelude to Schumann's fusion of genre in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* that embodies the Romantic ideal of the *Roman*, a unique melding of the tendencies of the defunct categories of genre. In this chapter I shall first explore how genre was viewed by the nineteenth-century, then Schumann's audition of genre as a communicative means in the *Fantasie*. Finally I will review Schumann's "generic system" and observe how this system culminated in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, simultaneously exemplifying the *Roman* ideal and fulfilling the generic aspect of the Grand Opus.

### **Genre and the Romantics**

Genre exerts a persuasive force. It guides the responses of the listeners... The choice of genre by a composer and its identification by the listener establish the framework for the communication of meaning... A kind of "generic contract" develops between composer and listener: the composer agrees to use some of the conventions, patterns, and gestures of a genre, and the listener consents to interpret some aspects of the piece in a way conditioned by this genre. This contract may be signalled to the listener in a number of ways: title, meter, tempo, and characteristic opening gestures are some of the common means... Generic contracts, like their legal counterparts, may be broken; indeed frustrated expectations often play a key role in the communicative process. Departures from perceived norms or expectations in genre have been a persistent stumbling block for many critics. (Kallberg in *NcM* XI: 243)

As early as the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century individual genres had become synonymous with specific extra-musical meanings beyond, but often related to, their original vocational utility. Extra-musical meaning is not inherent to genre but is formed

through association, an association that is maintained outside of the function for which the genre was originally composed, obvious examples being the correlation of the genres of romantic dance and religious observance with courtship and the sacrosanct respectively. Dahlhaus reflected on this subject with the following statement:

The functionlessness or autonomy of musical works of art, their emancipation from external goals, means no such radical break with the tradition of functional music... The purposes were 'transcended': put out of commission, and at the same time assumed into the interior of the works. Traits that had earlier been imposed on a musical genre from outside transformed themselves into immanent characteristics (Dahlhaus 1982: 14-5).

The communicative connotations of genre can be seen in Johann Adam Hiller's 1766 review of six symphonies by Giovanni Gabriel Mender, where the critic's response to the inclusion of minuets in Mender's symphonies was to complain that "Minuets in symphonies always seem to us like beauty spots on the face of a man: they give the music a foppish appearance" (Hiller in Head 1995: 144). Thus the minuet genre, for Hiller, implied a femininity alien to his association of the symphonic genre with serious and masculine topics. As shall be seen, Schumann purposefully employed these generic connotations and prejudices in a similar manner in his *Fantasie*.

An extension upon the idea of connotative genre is to consider not only what genre is being employed in a nineteenth-century composition, but the manner in which it is employed. Vera Micznik echoes much the same sentiment in her discussion of the climax of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of Mahler's Ninth Symphony where the composer evokes a waltz, but a waltz that after a typical presentation of the genre takes a "sinister turn, grinding away mechanically and mindlessly in a shrieking, choking voice", (Micznik 1994: 119) a vivid description that is, perhaps, enough to convince us that simply labelling this section simply as a 'waltz' does not do justice to

Mahler's treatment of the traditionally light-hearted dance genre. There are obviously layers of meaning to this section of Mahler's Ninth Symphony; layers of meaning that are located in the composer's use of genre. Micznik goes on to hypothesise that

what takes place here is a simultaneous affirmation and negation of genre: yes, the section is originally related to a specific form of waltz, but the point is that here the waltz has gone astray and thus has belied its origins. Obviously, this kind of play cannot be accounted for by the traditional structural analyses which discuss meaning only in terms of a scheme of fixed generic types. We need to refine and redefine our sensitivity to genre through generic reinterpretations that challenge the seemingly perfect coincidences of form and genre (Micznik 1994: 120).

The redefinition of our sensitivity to categorisation for considerations of nineteenth-century approaches to genre must explore beyond the mere identification of genre and its surface connotations to consider the treatment of a given genre, or genres, because the modification of a genre equally modifies its connotations. As we shall see, the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of Schumann's *Fantasie*, formed from an amalgamation of the genres of piano sonata and song, is interrupted by a foreign and self-contained lyric miniature separately entitled *Im Legendenton*. This lyric miniature is forced directly into the piano sonata and song union as a purposeful interruption to a carefully constructed generic narrative. The context and treatment of genre thus informs the meaning and significances derived from those original genres. Therefore, Micznik's statement "what is important is not what genre Mahler chooses to rely on, but what he does with it. The manipulations are of a wide variety, and so are the "poetic effects" he obtains from these manipulations" (Micznik 1994: 148) is equally true for Schumann.

The rudimentary association of individual genres with extra-musical meaning culminates in Friedrich Schlegel's theory of the refined *Roman* – a poetic category that would "bring together, in a marvellous unity, all the disparate tendencies and types that had previously been kept separate" (Daverio 1993: 127). In Schlegel's vision each *Roman* would be a unique conflation of genre, not as crude

correspondences such as equating the minuet with effeminacy, but by extracting from traditional genres “tendencies” and “tones” and re-combining these subtle meanings into a unique form to communicate a specific meaning for an individual artwork. Through this process the poet, or for our discussion the composer, transcends generic categorisation as “the fundamental genres, are transformed into a radically new product and not merely juxtaposed in an artistically inept hodgepodge” (Daverio 1993: 132). However, Schumann’s *Fantasie* directly, almost purposefully, creates such a generic “hodgepodge”. Although the genres of song and piano sonata are combined to poetic effect in the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Fantasie* the fusion runs headlong into the lyric miniature of *Im Legendenton*. Therefore, rather than transferring and elevating genre into tones and qualities, as defined by Schlegel, in the *Fantasie* Schumann employs genre in its raw form through the opposition or combination of separate generic entities. Thus the *Fantasie* may be observed as an early attempt by Schumann at the fusion of genre as a communicative means, a trial run that failed to match Schlegel’s conception of the perfect *Roman* genre but which lay the foundations of experimentation that a decade later would culminate in *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust*.

### **What’s in a name?**

A revealing element in understanding Schumann’s approach to genre in both structural and communicative functions is uncovered in an examination of the titles he considered for his C major *Fantasie*. This examination will show that Schumann was fully aware of the connotative power of genre, as discussed above, as both a positive and negative force and that he used this knowledge as a means of communication in his *Fantasie*. First I shall show how Schumann purposefully limited the extent of the

“generic contract” of his Op.17 through the choice of the title *Fantasie*, then how he used the freedom from these historical expectations to utilize the genres of piano sonata, song and lyric miniature in a unique interaction in the *Fantasie* to symbolically communicate his generic narrative.

The clearest presentation of the different names attributed to the *Fantasie* is a simple table:

Table 1. Names attributed to the C major *Fantasie*, Op.17 during its composition.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title (whole: movements)</i>	<i>Notes</i>
June 1836	Ruins (Ruines): Fantaisie	One movement
December 1836	Sonata for Beethoven: Ruins (Ruines), Trophies (Trophäen), Palms (Palmen)	Described as ‘Obolus for Beethoven’s monument’ Now three movements
May 1837	Fantasies (Phantasieen)	
January 1838	Fantasiestücke (Phantasiestücke)	From diary
February 1838	Fata Morgana	
March 1838	Fantasy (Phantasie)	From letter
April 1838	Poems (Dichtungen): Ruins (Ruinen), Triumphal Arch (Siegesbogen), Constellation (Sternbild)	
December 1838	Fantasy (Phantasie): each movement headed by a triangular device of three stars	
March/April 1839	<i>Fantasie</i> , Op.17	Published in this form without headings for individual movements

We can distinguish from the titles considered for the work as a whole (Table 1) two categories of designation: generic and descriptive. We shall address these two classes separately because “a generic name such as ‘sonata’ or ‘fantasy’ (and variations upon ‘Fantasy’) encourages us to consider the given work in relation to the tradition of similarly titled pieces...But descriptive titles arouse no such definitive expectations” (Marston 1992: 24). We see here Nicholas Marston engages with the crux of the matter as he separates Schumann’s considered titles between those that form a “generic contract” with an audience and those that do not.

The naming of a work is intrinsically related to the genre of the composition, with the many genres titled simply by their category, for example the piano concerto or the symphony. Schumann talked explicitly about two of the generic titles he considered for his Op.17 in a review of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* of 1835, the year before the composition of what became his *Fantasie*, in terms that evoke a clear appreciation of the negative aspects of Kallberg's "generic contract":

we are used to making initial inferences about a thing from the name that it bears. We have one set of expectations of a 'fantasy', another of a 'sonata'.

We are satisfied if a second-rate talent shows that he has mastered the traditional range of forms, whereas with a first-rate talent we allow that he expand that range. Only a genius may reign freely (Schumann in Bent 2002: 171).

Schumann went on to say in the same article that

nothing so easily vexes people and gets their backs up as a new form under an old name. If, for example, someone wanted to call something in 5/4 time a 'March', or something in twelve short movements a 'Symphony', he would encounter instant opposition. Yet we ought always to look at a thing on its own terms. The stranger and more ingenious a thing outwardly appears, the more carefully we ought to judge it. And is not our experience with Beethoven a lesson for us? Were not his works, particularly his later works, at first unintelligible to us, with all the odd features of construction and the strange forms in which he was so inexhaustibly inventive, even as regards the spiritual content [*Geist*], though no one could surely deny the existence of that (Schumann in Bent 2002: 174-5).

These statements, so contemporary to the *Fantasie* and their reflection of the ideas inherent to a consideration of Romantic genre, could not seem more applicable to the discussion in hand. As we shall see, Schumann purposefully avoided giving his 'new form' an 'old name' so as not to 'vex' his audience.

We can infer from his comments seen above several opinions held by Schumann on the subject of naming works and, therefore, genre. He was quite clearly aware of the historical 'baggage' associated with generic names such as sonata and fantasy and maintains that each composition should be approached as a unique work



and, more importantly, that it was the mark, perhaps duty, of a composer of ‘first-rate talent’ to rise above these connotations and expand beyond the traditional generic limits – in other words a superior composer should aim to break Kallberg’s “generic contract”. Schumann even expressed his annoyance that audiences and critics are too concerned with what a work should be because of its name, complaining that this distracts them from a true understanding of an individual and unique composition, a complaint that reflects directly on the choice of title for the *Fantasie*.

The historical ‘baggage’ of the mid-nineteenth-century sonata form was both extensive and entrenched. By 1837, the year Schumann turned away from ‘Sonata’ as a name for his Op.17 to a more opaque title, the first definitions of what constituted a sonata had been drafted by theorists such Francesco Galeazzi, Anton Reicha and Carl Czerny. Up until this point sonata form had been a practice of composition, a flexible template of the eighteenth-century to be adapted and developed as needed, but through their definitions and analyses the early nineteenth-century theorists crystallised and froze sonata form into a fixed theory. Indeed, with the arrival of the definition of the sonata came the view that it was now too rigid a form for the freedom of Romantic expression and even that it was passé. Schumann and his contemporaries questioned whether the use of sonata form in the nineteenth-century was a true manifestation of Romanticism or a purely historical academic practice, as seen in Schumann’s statement of 1839 that he considered sonata form “only as a kind of testing grounds, as studies in form” (Newman 1983: 38) for younger and unknown composers to practice and present their compositional credentials.

In contrast to the sonata, the relative weakness of the Fantasy category’s “generic contract” can be seen from Field’s definition of ‘Fantasia’ as

a term adopted in the Renaissance for an instrumental composition whose form and invention spring ‘solely from the fantasy and skill of the author

who created it' (Luis de Milán, 1535). From the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> the fantasia tended to retain this subjective licence, and its formal and stylistic characteristics may consequently vary wildly from free, improvisatory types to strictly contrapuntal and more or less standard sectional forms (Field 1980: 380).

From this description it can be appreciated just how much freedom from tradition, assumption and implication is provided by the title *Fantasia* compared to that of Sonata, which bears a long established formal and stylistic tradition. The few expectations of a nineteenth-century 'Fantasia' were a single movement work, typically for keyboard, with an improvisatory quality that contained a contrast of tempo and tonality, but even these vague characteristics were drawn into uncertainty by the Romantics who reformed the 'Fantasia' as a musically substantial multi-movement work with some element of thematic unity, an example of this being Schumann's *Fantasia*.

In opposition to the generic titles of 'Sonata' and derivations of 'Fantasy' that Schumann considered for his Op.17 were the descriptive titles *Ruins*, *Fata Morgana*, and *Poems*, while he also attributed various designations to the three individual movements including *Ruins*, *Triumphal Arch*, *Constellation*, *Trophies*, *Palms*, and a triangular pattern of three stars. The importance of the title *Ruins* to Schumann is revealed by its unique retention and can be associated with the monument to Beethoven to which the *Fantaise* was contributed, while *Poems* could easily relate to Schumann's great enthusiasm for literary techniques and styles reflected in his work. However, *Triumphal Arch* and *Constellation* escape any meaningful interpretation and Schumann's ignored command to his publishers of December 1838 to replace the title of each movement with a triangular device of three stars is inexplicable. These apparently meaningless titles and symbols are further attempts by Schumann to avoid restrictive labelling of his Op.17 and illustrate the need for the movements of the

*Fantasie* to be approached as unique and individual constructs. The search for correspondences between titles such as *Constellation* or *Palms* and the music of the *Fantasie* leads only to bemusement and as such encourages us, rather than simply dismissing the work as a 'Sonata' to 'look at a thing on its own terms' as was the composer's desire.

### **The Genres of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Fantasie***

The three genres at work in the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of Schumann's *Fantasie* are the piano sonata, lyric miniature, and song, manifested in the sonata form, *Im Legendenton* section, and allusion to Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* respectively. In the following section I shall identify the three genres at work in the *Fantasie*, examine their interaction in the 1<sup>st</sup> movement, and then discern how this interaction presents a formal narrative of interrupted unity.

The genre of the piano sonata is clearly projected through the domination of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement by a strong sonata form structure. The sonata form may be recognised through the formal characteristics of an introduction, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> subjects (b.19 and b.41 respectively), a period of development of these subjects after their initial statements (b.82), the recapitulation (b.119)<sup>2</sup> of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> subjects (and also development section in a gesture atypical to sonata form) and a conclusive coda (b.295). However, this sonata form is undermined by a weak tonal presentation. The traditional tonic-dominant relationship of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> subjects is replaced by a weaker conflict between two tonal groups of C major/Eb major and D minor/ F major.

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<sup>2</sup> Daverio is mistaken in his placing of the recapitulation at b.97, which is in fact a false recapitulation, an error that unbalances his sonata form proportions.

The tonic is, in fact, not realised until b.296-7 with the first perfect cadence in C major of the whole movement. This, as we shall see, is part of the generic narrative communicated in the *Fantasie* as the achievement of the tonic in the coda signals the completion of a longed for goal.

The assertion of a sonata form for the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Fantasie* seen above completely ignores a large section of music from b.129 to b.224 entitled *Im Legendenton*<sup>3</sup>. The *Im Legendenton* is typical of the lyric miniature genre it represents: small (95 bars), self-contained, independent, and of limited expressive and emotional capacity – generic characteristics that perfectly suited Schumann’s requirements for a short interlude to interrupt his *Fantasie*. The structure of *Im Legendenton* is a rondo-variation character of ABACA framed by an introduction and a coda with a strong C minor tonality fully contained within its 95 bar span. A brief summary of the various names Schumann gave to the *Im Legendenton* before its final form will serve to illustrate the generic credentials of the sections as a lyric miniature.

Table 2. Names originally given to the *Im Legendenton* section of the *Fantasie*

Date	Title	Source	Notes
June 1836	Romanza	Autograph Manuscript	
Late 1838	Erzählend im Legendenton (narrating in the manner of a legend)	Stichvorlage	
Late 1838	Im Legenden Ton	Stichvorlage	Corrected from previous title

As we can see from Table 2, originally *Im Legendenton* was called *Romanza*, a genre commonly associated with small-scale instrumental character pieces but initially a

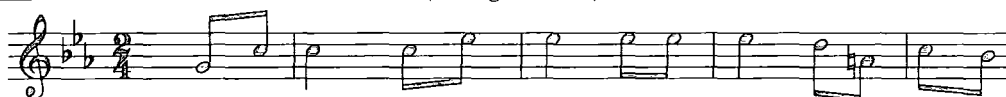
<sup>3</sup> Some critics have identified the *Im Legendenton* section as a development section, or replacement for one, but this is in error because the use of thematic material in the *Im Legendenton* is distinctly non-developmental in nature (despite its basis upon thematic material from the exposition). More importantly, there is both distinctly developmental material already within the sonata structure and what appears to be a recapitulation, both of which occur *before* the *Im Legendenton* section. Therefore the *Im Legendenton* does not act or behave as a development section and even terming it a “self-contained interlude” or a “static” replacement for a development is unconvincing as the *Im Legendenton* occurs outside of the sonata form structure, beginning as it does ten bars after the traditional recapitulation.

vocal genre. Although the later titles of *Erzählend im Legendenton* and *Im Legendenton* also bear song and narrative connotations, it is in the original *Romanza* title that the genre of *Im Legendenton* is to be found. In 1802 Heinrich Christoph Koch defined the *Romanze* as a narrative vocal genre, while for an instrumental *Romanze* a slow tempo and rondo form “was well suited to the artless and naïve expression of sad or amorous feelings” (Marston in *NcM* XVI: 231) associated with the genre, a description that matches *Im Legendenton* perfectly. Indeed, Berthold Hoeckner has convincingly illustrated that Schumann’s original influence for his *Romanza* was Clara Wieck’s own *Romance variée* Op.3, a set of lyric miniature variations. For a comparison of the themes of Clara Wieck’s *Romance* and Schumann’s *Romanza* (later *Im Legendenton*) themes see Ex.1 and Ex.2.

Ex.1 Clara Wieck’s *Romance variée*, b.117-20



Ex.2 Schumann’s *Fantasie*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement (*Im Legendenton*), b.140-4



The final genre to be incorporated into the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Fantasie* alongside the piano sonata and the lyric miniature is the genre of the *Lied*. Having taken formal and stylistic influences from the genres of piano sonata and lyric miniature, Schumann exports a more fundamental aspect of the song genre into the *Fantasie*: the concept of narrative. Although instrumental music may contain some element of fundamental narrative, for example the conflict inherent between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> subjects of sonata form, through a poetic text a song may communicate a detailed and emotionally complex drama – a quality unavailable to music without literary association. By providing such an association Schumann achieves just such a

complexity by alluding thematically (see Ex.3 and Ex.4) to the genre of song,  
specifically the sixth and final song of Beethoven’s *An die ferne Geliebte*, a work with  
a poetic text:

*An die ferne Geliebte*, no.6

Take, then, these songs  
Which I sang for you beloved;  
Sing them again in the evening  
To the sweet sound of the lute.

Then, as the twilight’s glow moves  
Toward the still, blue lake,  
And the last ray dies away  
Behind that mountaintop;

And as you sing what I have sung,  
The songs that sprang from my full breast  
Without artificial pomp,  
Knowing only longing;

Then these songs will overcome  
What separated us,  
And a loving heart will attain  
What a loving heart has offered!  
(Hoeckner 2002: 98)

Ex.3 Beethoven’s *An die ferne Geliebte*, song VI, b.266-7



Ex.4 Schumann’s *Fantasie*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, b.295-6



The narrative Schumann brings to the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of his *Fantasie* through his allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte* is, then, one of yearning toward a distant goal. The manner in which Schumann employs his allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte*, and thus alludes to the *Lied* genre in his *Fantasie*, echoes this narrative as the thematic reference is disseminated throughout all the thematic material of the movement without ever fully asserting itself, a vague suggestion of a melody that is more forcefully asserted at three key points in the movement. The three occasions that indistinctly allude to *An die ferne Geliebte* are at the close of the exposition (b.79-81), in the *B* section of *Im Legendenton*, and at the close of the recapitulation before the repeat of the development section (b.272-3). At these moments the Beethoven song-cycle quotation is only vaguely projected, but with the full achievement of the allusion in the coda (b.295) these moments are retrospectively recognised as failed attempts at the complete theme. Achieved simultaneously with the full realization of this longed for thematic reference to *An die ferne Geliebte* is the first perfect cadence in the tonic of C major at b.296 to b.297, therefore combining the thematic and tonal goals of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Fantasie* within the coda, the satisfaction of the yearning alluded to by the *An die ferne Geliebte* text, as we shall see.

Jeffery Kallberg recognised that composers could generate meaning through genre when he observed that “genres do not necessarily act in isolation from one another...Genres may interact in a number of ways. Hierarchical arrays are perhaps the most obvious of these interactions” (Kallberg in *NcM* XI: 244). The hierarchical interaction of genres in the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of Schumann’s *Fantasie* is the conflict between the ‘high’ genre of the piano sonata, provided with extra-musical meaning by the melodic allusion to a Beethoven *Lied*, clashing dissonantly against the ‘low’ genre

of the lyric miniature, a negativity that bears great expressive power. Schumann creates this conflict by isolating stylistic traits from the genres of the piano sonata, song, and lyric miniature and interacting them in a single movement. The generic characteristic Schumann takes from the piano sonata is the elegant sonata form that governs the main body of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Fantasie*, while from the *Lied* Schumann takes the trait of extra-musical narrative. Schumann combines the two traits of these genres in a single sonata/*Lied* amalgam that he then interrupts with the *Im Legendenton* section. The generic characteristic displayed by the *Im Legendenton* is the independence of the lyric miniature, a stylistic tendency that he instils in this section by separating it from the surrounding sonata/*Lied* amalgamation through a new title, double-bar lines, new time signature, pauses before and after, a new key of C minor prepared by a four bar introduction, a nine bar coda closing with a perfect cadence, and then the reversal of almost all of these changes back to their original state at the end of the interlude as the *Fantasie* is restored back to the sonata and song combination. These factors mark the *Im Legendenton* section as stylistically foreign to what comes before and after its brief span, an observation also made by Daverio who perceived the alien nature of the interlude when he stated that the *Im Legendenton* “clearly interrupts an ongoing process, only to “speak” in a manner that is sharply differentiated from that of the surrounding music” (Daverio 1993: 29).

The isolation of the lyric miniature from the piano sonata/*Lied* amalgamation, as noted by Daverio, may be related to Friedrich Schlegel’s philosophical idea of the arabesque: “the fracturing of Schumann’s grandly conceived sonata design, the apparently arbitrary positioning of the *Im Legendenton* section, the ensuing sense of narrative disturbance – all of this is in line with the theory of the *Arabesque*” (Daverio 1993: 20). But even though the *Im Legendenton* lyric miniature interrupts and



digresses at great length from the sonata/*Lied*, after it has run its course and completed its conflict, the sonata/*Lied* union restarts where it was interrupted and continues as before to its conclusion in the coda. In other words, despite the interjection of the lyric miniature a successful conclusion is still achieved. Indeed, the clash of generic characteristics of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Fantasie* is, on the surface, antagonistic, but the destructive marriage of these genres gives birth to a sense of large-scale *Witz* where the vigour of the clash brings creative energy to the work. The traditional narrative direction of the typical sonata form, stating ones material in the opening passages and then digressing through developments, is reversed so that it is the conclusion, the coda, which is the 'clearest' formal point of the movement where the actual tonic and fundamental thematic material are finally revealed. In a sense, the apparent challenge to the teleological forms of the past through the interruption of the *Im Legendenton*, as hypothesised by Daverio, masks an even stronger sense of teleology: the coda is indispensable to an understanding of the work and the vague tonal projections and formal *Arabesques* of the movement are simply plot twists that lead inexorably to the denouement of the coda, the intended and necessary tonal and thematic conclusions to the *Fantasie*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement. Therefore the negativity of the digression of *Im Legendenton* grants a unique generic and formal status to the *Fantasie* that transcends the limits of the genre, a notion that echoes with, but does not fulfil, Schlegel's conception of the *Roman*.

### **Genre and Scenes from Goethe's Faust**

Schlegel's *Roman* entails the transcendence above genre, a transcendence that first requires the mastery of genre. We can observe in Schumann's career an almost predetermined and orderly progression through the varying genres available to him.

This progression and gradual development of a vast generic vocabulary allowed Schumann to compose his oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as an example of Schlegel's *Roman*. Through the *Roman*, the oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* fulfils one aspect of the Grand Opus as a generic culmination of Schumann's career.

As we saw previously, Friedrich Schlegel, in his *Fragmente zur Letteratur und Poesie*, dismissed the classical genres as antithetical to what he saw as the ultimate Romantic mode of expression, the *Roman*. The *Roman* genre was a "marvellous unity, all the disparate tendencies and types that had previously been kept separate" (Daverio 1993: 127) and as such were encyclopaedia of genre, individual and unique approaches to the diffuse genres of Romantic art, for example the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony that Daverio described as an "encapsulation of an entire epoch's forms and genres in the space of a thirty-minute musical movement" (Daverio 1993: 128). Schlegel's *Roman* category contains two paradoxes: first it is a genre that transcends genre, the categorisation of a work that defies categorisation; secondly to transcend genre, to dismiss it as meaningless, genre must first be given a meaning, the crystallisation of what is being transcended. These paradoxes are enacted in the culmination of Schumann's generic system in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*. Although the title 'oratorio' subsumes the vast array of generic modes of expression within its limits, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* transcends genre as the composer's Grand Opus, a genre unto itself. Also, with the culmination in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* of the preceding decades of generic experimentation and exploration of Schumann's generic system, the generic system itself is instantly reduced to the status of preparation for this generic climax. In other words, because all Schumann's previous achievements in the field of genre are encapsulated within his Grand Opus, the same previous achievements that qualified Schumann to compose

*Scenes from Goethe's Faust* are retrospectively rendered as practice and rehearsal for the summative triumph of his career. In this manner, Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* embodies Schlegel's *Roman* genre and simultaneously satisfies the generic combination required of the Grand Opus.

Daverio theorised that Schumann's generic system was, in part, the act of a composer who wished to emulate the achievements of Beethoven who also comprehensively surveyed the broad expanse of genre available to him. Schumann's unusual approach to genre was to focus upon one particular medium until he had exhausted himself in that direction, before turning onto a new, unexplored path and repeating the process. Of course there are works that lie outside of this 'system' and this presentation of his career does not appreciate the vast variation within the genres that Schumann explored, nor the experimentation of differing scales of composition. Another problem is the isolation that such a system suggests when in fact,

just as significant as the individuality of the genres is their interdependence in Schumann's hands. Like his poetic cycles for keyboard, his song cycles may be viewed as constellations of lyric fragments. The symphonic works of 1841 make both overt and covert allusions to the earlier songs and piano pieces. In the oratorio *Das Paradies und die Peri*, he drew on his previous experience as a composer of vocal and orchestral music (Daverio 2001: 774).

Also, although there is a certain progressional logic to the process there is no evidence that Schumann deliberately planned such a systematic progression through the musical genres while the system also ignores any pragmatic factors that may have motivated a change of genre, for example the move from piano music to song in 1840 that was influenced to some degree by the commercial possibilities of the *Lied* at a time when Friedrich Wieck was accusing Schumann of lacking the financial means to support his daughter. Nonetheless, the structuring of Schumann's career into a generic system remains, despite the misleading rigidity of asserting such a system, a highly

informative method of viewing the composer's work as a whole, and a whole whose capstone appears to be the oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*.

Schumann's generic system appears to have run in three cycles, each one pursuing a comprehensive review of generic variety. The first cycle runs from the early 1820s, after Schumann's decision to commit himself fully to a compositional career, to the early 1830s and the unfinished G minor Symphony: "In the space of a decade, he had either completed, drafted, begun, or completed works in practically all of the major musical genres: oratorio, lied, keyboard music in forms great and small (theme-and variations, etude, contrapuntal study, character piece, sonata), chamber music, concerto, symphony, and even opera" (Daverio 1997: 103). The next two decades saw the reproduction of this cycle, but on a far grander scale and with the full completion of works in every genre. As such we see Schumann concentrating upon piano music from 1833-9, then the 'Year of Song', symphony, chamber music, and oratorio genres in 1840, 1841, 1842, and 1843 respectively, contrapuntal forms in 1845, and dramatic music from 1847 to 1848. Finally, the last four years of Schumann's career appear as a revisiting of these cycles as from 1850-4 he wrote fifty works, some on a grand scale, which viewed as a whole

recapitulate the earlier progression through the genres (the poetic cycle for keyboard, the lied, symphony, concerto, chamber music in the 'higher' forms, oratorio and instrumental *Hausmusik* are all represented), a process culminating in the choral-orchestral ballade (a pendant to the 'literary operas' of the Dresden years) and the composition of church music (Daverio 2001: 788).

In this final cycle Schumann continued to explore genre with the virgin territory of religious compositions in 1852 as well as extending his earlier technical advancements, such as his method of fashioning large-scale continuity through thematic webs, and developing new and innovative compositional techniques.

Daverio, who formulated the view of Schumann's career as a progression through a generic system, viewed *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as maintaining a special position within, or perhaps more accurately outside of, his system. He said of the oratorio "The work at once acts as the capstone of his literary operas and nearly serves in the same capacity vis-à-vis his conquest of the musical genres" (Daverio 1997: 365). Daverio, however, offers no rationale for the oratorio's failure to provide the capstone to his generic system, although one may perhaps deduce that for Daverio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* does not assimilate all of the composer's previous genres: "his *Faust* scenes bring together an encyclopaedic array of genres: church music, oratorio, horror opera, grand opera, lied, symphony. The result...is not a harmonious unity, but a heterogeneous totality, a system of musico-poetic fragments - a musical novel" (Daverio 1997: 387). Daverio rightly selects the dominant generic forces of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* but a detailed analysis of the individual scenes reveals Schlegel's conception of the *Roman*, within which genre *as a whole* is reduced to tones and tendencies to suggest and intimate as connotations rather than as stable and formulated categories. The *Roman* does not require the presence of all generic types, but the use of those that are needed to communicate the unique requirements and significance of the ideal Romantic artwork. As we shall observe presently in my analysis of Part One of the oratorio, genre is deployed in the subtlest of manners, and Schumann's generic palette for his illustration is the entire stylistic breadth of genre. He combines and mixes the hues and colours of various genres, employing their unspoken "generic contracts" through the use of their distinctive styles and topoi, to communicate through implication both the thrust and undercurrents of Goethe's drama. As such, Schumann's use of genre in his oratorio will be seen to be both the

embodiment of Schlegel's *Roman* genre and the culmination of the composer's "generic system" and thus fulfil a vital aspect of the Grand Opus genre.

Scene 1 (*Scene in the Garden*), where Faust attempts to woo Gretchen, is organised generically into something of a Rondo form, but rather than having an often repeated section of music or thematic unit there is instead the recapitulation of the 'tonic' genre of the waltz. The waltz is traditionally a popular, rather than art, music and is generally restricted to chamber music due to its inconsequential intellectual and emotional depth while the "generic contract" of the waltz communicates a graceful dance between two romantically involved partners. Schumann's use of the waltz as a background to the saccharine flirting of Faust and Gretchen displays the idealised nature of this relationship, the isolation of its participants from reality in an idyllic and superficial world of love and romance. However, the romantic interplay of the lovers is distracted each time it is initiated. Reality and its responsibilities and concerns impinge upon this idealised world and corrupt its innocent state of mind with the pragmatic concerns of their relationship. Thus the popular and superficially optimistic waltz is contaminated and led astray by the gradual influence of the stylistic traits of the operatic aria, a genre more often associated in the nineteenth-century with the actions and consequences of an earthly existence, even when set in the magical or mythical context typical of the Romantic period. This change from dream to reality, waltz to aria, occurs twice before the third restatement of the 'tonic' genre of the waltz is overrun by the tones and tendencies of the operatic aria<sup>4</sup>. Table 3 illustrates the four incarnations of the generic rondo form as sections A, A<sup>1</sup>, A<sup>2</sup> and A<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> For an alternative explanation of this form of generic combination see M. Wing Hirsch (1993) and her discussion of Schubert's mixed-genre *Lieder*. It would seem, however, that Hirsch's lyrico-dramatic 'spectrum', which describes the varying degrees of a poetic synthesis of dramatic and lyrical traits, is not applicable to Scene 1 of Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* where the widely differing generic traits alternate, interact, conflict and combine with one another in a kind of generic narrative that portrays the developing drama of the scene, rather than as a unified amalgamation.



Ex.6 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, violin I and cello b.1-5

Violin I

Cello

*p dolce* *cresc.*

*p* *fp* *cresc.*

*p* *fp* *cresc.*

However, at fig.A the generic tendencies of the waltz give way to the stylistic traits of the operatic aria, in other words Schumann forms a new “generic contract” with his audience by employing a new set of generic tones. This change reflects the subtle transformation in Goethe’s dialogue between Faust and Gretchen from a coy exchange of questions to Gretchen’s consideration of her relationship with Faust in the context of her life and the assertion of her moral fortitude.

**Faust:** You knew me again, you little angel,  
as soon as you saw me enter the garden?

**Gretchen:** Didn’t you see me cast down my eyes?

**Faust:** And liberty that I took you pardon?  
The impudence that reared its head  
when you lately left the cathedral door.

**Gretchen:** I was upset; it had never happened before.

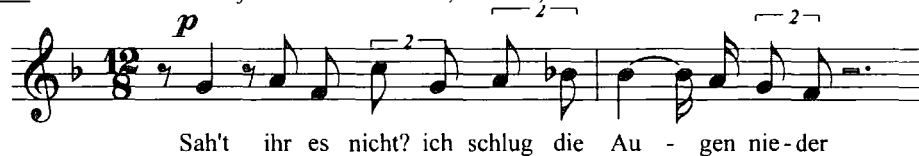
**Faust:** And you pardon?

**Gretchen:** No one could ever say anything bad of me –  
Oh can he, I thought, have seen in my behaviour  
any cheekiness, any impropriety?  
The idea, it seemed, had come to you pat:  
‘I can treat this woman just like that’.  
I must admit I did not know what it was  
in my heart that began to make me change my view.



The traits of the operatic aria begin to assert control as the melodic thematic style of the waltz gradually becomes a declamatory vocal manner that, to a certain extent, imitates speech patterns, as illustrated by a comparison of Gretchen's "Didn't you see me cast down my eyes?" (Ex.7) which is set to a lilting and rhapsodic melodic shape of the waltz style, and "I was upset; it had never happened before" (Ex.8) which has a more declamatory operatic style outlining commanding fifths.

Ex.7 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, Gretchen b.9-10



Ex.8 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, Gretchen b.14-15



Also, Schumann's harmonic palette widens to include discordant and minor harmonic relationships that can express greater emotional depth and so we see the first focus upon the minor tonalities of the scene that reflects a less optimistic view of the world than could be presented by the idyllic waltz style. Finally the continual pulse demanded by a dance genre gives way to the rhythmic freedom needed to portray dramatic ebb and flow as fig.A signals the halting of the pizzicato contrabasses and the relegation of the previously dominant pulsating wind chords to the violas alone. Schumann does not invoke a specific type of aria, for example an aria agitata or aria di bravura, but a general operatic style which, through Kallberg's "generic contract", affords a much greater emotional and dramatic scope than that provided by the waltz. The juxtaposition of the distinctive topoi and styles of these two genres, separated by

only a few bars, contrasts the relatively superficial romance and grace of the waltz with the larger emotional and dramatic scope that is allowed by the greater freedom of harmony, rhythm, and vocal style of the generic tendencies of the operatic aria.

However, just as Gretchen approaches the emotional climax of her speech with “I can treat this woman just like that”, the idealised fantasy world where she and Faust may be together, indicated generically by the tendencies of the waltz, begins to reassert itself over the reality of the operatic aria. This return, seen in the gradual reintroduction of the waltz style into the texture through the alternation of the contrabasses with the reinvigorated pulsating chords of the violas and violins, culminates in a full recapitulation of the ‘tonic’ genre of the waltz at section A<sup>1</sup> (fig.B, Ex.9), exemplified by an altered reprise of the 1<sup>st</sup> violin and cello exchanges reinforced by the addition of the violas an octave below the violins.

Ex.9 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, violin I and cello b.28-32

The musical score for Violin I and Cello, measures 28-32, is presented in two systems. The Violin I part is in the treble clef, and the Cello part is in the bass clef. Both parts are in 12/8 time and B-flat major. The Violin I part starts with a 'p dolce' marking, followed by a 'cresc.' marking. The Cello part also starts with a 'p dolce' marking. Both parts feature a series of eighth-note patterns. The Violin I part has a 'p' marking at measure 30 and a 'fp' marking at measure 31. The Cello part has a 'p' marking at measure 30 and a 'fp' marking at measure 31. The score ends with a final measure in measure 32.

This first restatement of the waltz style, however, lacks the unmistakable waltz topos of the pizzicato contrabasses while the recapitulation itself is soon led astray at b.33, immediately after the example provided, again by the tones of the operatic aria. It

seems as if the original idealised and flirtatious mood of Schumann's Scene 1 has been irrevocably damaged by the intrusion of reality into Faust and Gretchen's fantasy world. Thus the waltz genre's stylistic trait of a continual triple time dance rhythm quickly begins to falter through b.33-6 and at fig.C is discarded altogether. Meanwhile, two further operatic traits can be seen in the text painting of Gretchen plucking petals from a flower through pizzicato strings simultaneously with her gradually rising line for "Loves me – Loves me not – Loves me – Not – Loves me – Not – Loves me – Not. Loves me!" which provides harmonic and dramatic tension. The comparison of b.35-6 with b.37-8 in Ex.10 illustrates the juxtaposition of the generic styles of the waltz and aria at this moment:

Ex.10 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, vocals and orchestra b.35-8

The musical score for measures 35-8 of Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* features three staves: Gretchen (soprano), Faust (bass), and the Orchestra. Gretchen's part begins with the instruction "(Sie ruft und murmelt)" and ends with "(halblaut)" and the lyrics "Er liebt mich". Faust's part begins with the lyrics "Was murmeldst du?". The Orchestra part is marked *pp* and includes pizzicato markings ("Pizz.") and asterisks (\*) in measures 35 and 37. A large 'C' is placed above the staff in measure 37, indicating a change in style or tempo.

Gretchen's game, with its sudden abandonment of rhythmic momentum, increase of harmonic tension and emotional content and the use of text painting, signals a sudden increase in the dominance of the operatic aria style at fig.C as the projection of dramatic content becomes paramount in Schumann's priorities. Again, the generic tones of the aria and its connotations of earthly concerns have tainted and subdued the

idyllic atmosphere provided by the stylistic tendencies of the waltz. But this second distraction from the tonic waltz genre is not stimulated by the encroachment of reality into naive romantic interplay, but by an even further descent into the relationship, a relationship that will have real life repercussions. Therefore, in the same way that Gretchen's concern for her reputation provided the means of an interruption to the waltz genre, so too does her move from harmless flirting into the search for a sign of genuine love – no longer is it merely an innocent game.

At fig.D the stylistic traits of the tonic genre of the waltz return for a second time, now in Bb major, but in a weakened form dominated by the tendencies of an operatic aria style to reflect the succession of content from idle flirtatious banter to the declarations of love. The triple time dance rhythm and alternation of pizzicato contrabasses and pulsating chords that characterises the style of the waltz have completely disappeared and are replaced by an orchestral wash of chords over which Faust issues declamatory, aria-like vocal lines. The generic style of A<sup>2</sup> is not that of the popular and shallow dance but the emotionally laden and dramatically climactic aria. Through this change Schumann reveals the *Roman* at work in Scene 1 of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as the employment of the tones and tendencies of the waltz genre to depict the idyllic interchanges of Faust and Gretchen is, throughout its first two repetitions, subtly stripped of its characteristic rhythmic traits and harmonic superficiality to be replaced by the vocal, harmonic, and rhythmic style of the operatic aria that provides an emotional depth foreign to the waltz style. A comparison between the opening bars of the scene, section A (Ex.11 - the first appearance of the rondo genre), with section A<sup>2</sup> (Ex.12 - the third rondo manifestation), will serve to illustrate how the pulsating wind chords and thematic dialogue of the 1<sup>st</sup> violin and cellos have been transformed into an accompanying harmonic background with a

tremolo rising arpeggio figure in the cellos over which Faust declares his love for Gretchen. The changes Schumann makes to the repetitions of his generic waltz displays the gradual stylistic infection of the idyllic waltz with the worldly operatic aria.

Ex.11 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, b.1-2

Orch.

*p* *cresc.*

Ex.12 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, b.45-6

**D** (Mit Innigkeit)

Faust

Ja, mein Kind! lass die - ses Blu - men-wort dir

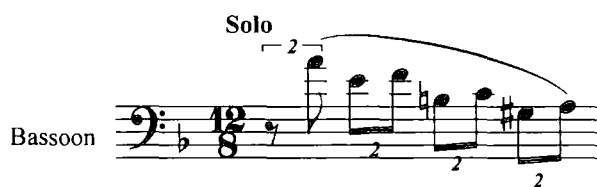
Orch.

*f* *p*

As with the previous statements of the tonic genre A and A<sup>1</sup>, at section A<sup>2</sup> of fig.D, the waltz is corrupted by the seeping influence of the operatic aria style. But where in A and A<sup>1</sup> this corruption was preceded by a relatively healthy statement of the waltz genre, with A<sup>2</sup> the genre is already dominated by operatic aria and so within nine bars of the restatement all pretence at the original lilting 12/8 rhythm of the popular dance that characterised the tonic genre is disregarded as Faust sings in duplets “to give

oneself up utterly and feel a rapture which must be everlasting”. This is followed by two clear signals of the domination of the tendencies of the operatic aria genre as Mephistopheles’ entry is prepared by the character’s *Leitmotif* for solo bassoon (Ex.13), a technique strongly associated with theatrical genres, and the instruction to the singer to perform the line *Quasi Recitativ*.

Ex.13 Schumann’s *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust*, Scene 1, bassoon b.57



**Mephistopheles:** It is time to part, you know

**Martha:** Yes, it is late, sir.

**Faust:** May I not see you home?

**Gretchen:** My mother would – farewell!

**Faust:** Must I go then? Farewell!

**Martha:** Adieu!

**Gretchen:** Let us soon meet again!

A third recapitulation of the tonic genre at b.61 with Faust’s phrase “May I not see you home?”, marked by a double bar line and *I. Tempo*, indicates the return to the original mood of the scene as Faust, in the wake of Mephistopheles’ intrusion into his romance of Gretchen, attempts to rejuvenate his flirtatious interaction with the young girl, an attempt reflected by Schumann through a recollection of a stylistically pure waltz genre as section A<sup>3</sup>. However Faust’s attempt to rekindle the idealised romantic world of the start of the scene is doomed to failure, the amorous interplay of the two lovers has passed, and so the waltz stutters and stumbles, able to speak only for a bar or so before it collapses back into the recitative of opera and the reality of Gretchen bidding farewell to Faust. Ex.14 depicts the rising arpeggiated figure of the cellos, a

characteristic theme of the waltz genre ‘tonic’ in Scene 1, emerging in the ‘wrong’ key of A major at b.60 out of Martha’s operatic recitative, only to fade into nothing. Again the arpeggio climbs in b.63, back in F major and accompanied by the distinctive pulsating 12/8 chords of the wind section (not depicted in Ex.12), but this attempted rejuvenation also fails as the waltz tendencies collapse again into vocal declaration over bare chordal accompanied, the stylistic markers of the operatic recitative.

Ex.14 Schumann’s of *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust*, Scene 1, b.60-64

**Martha** (kommt) **I. Tempo**

Martha and Gretchen: Ja, es ist spät, mein Herr!

Faust: Darf ich euch nicht ge -

Orch. *p*

Gretchen: Die Mut-ter wür-de mich lebt wohl!

lei - ten? Muss ich denn geh'n? Lebt wohl!

*p*

The effect invokes the image of Faust, desperate to be alone with Gretchen and pathetically trying to reinvigorate their flirtatious exchanges of the start of Scene 1, but instead thwarted and watching her walk away from him.

In Scene 1 the stylistic markers of the tonic genre of the waltz appear four times and are corrupted in each of these recapitulations by the encroachment of the generic style of the opera aria, the representative of reality intruding upon the lover's idealised romance. Each deviation from the waltz style is greater than the last so that by the final recollection of the waltz as section A<sup>3</sup> it cannot be restarted and the scene ends – the romance has, for the moment, faltered.

In Scene 2 (*Gretchen before the image of the Mater Dolorosa*), Schumann reverses the interplay of genre of Scene 1 as the waltz interrupts the tragic operatic aria, as dream imposes upon reality. The consequences of Faust and Gretchen's relationship are here fulfilled as Gretchen, kneeling before an image of the Mater Dolorosa, laments her tragic situation – illegitimately pregnant to a man who she loves but has abandoned her despite his declaration of love. The opening triplets of the viola (Ex.15) recall Mephistopheles' distinctive motif and simultaneously invoke a mocking corruption of the waltz topos of Scene 1.

Ex.15 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 2, viola b.1-3



This introduction gives way to the main body of the scene with Gretchen's declamatory vocal style over a slow moving, string-dominated, A minor harmonic accompaniment denoting the genre of the tragic operatic aria that characterises the



scene. Scene 2 is through composed, a further dramatic vocal genre trait, with a broad A minor – F major – A minor ternary structure that reinforces Schumann's disregard of Goethe's original strophic verses to provide Scene 2 with a formless air. Where in Scene 1 the generic tendencies of the operatic aria destabilised the idyllic waltz of Gretchen and Faust, in Scene 2 the relationship is reversed as, in the F major middle section of the broad ternary form, Gretchen recalls her brief tryst with Faust through a tonal and generic recollection of the waltz of Scene 1, albeit in a modified form, to suggest the memory of a better past. Changing from the previous common time to 6/4 with an F major key signature, the middle section of the loose ternary structure of Scene 2 reminisces upon the waltz style of *Scene in the Garden* with sweet diatonic harmony, a lilting triple metre rhythm, pizzicato contrabasses and a melodic line characterised by a melodic, rather than declamatory, vocal style to Gretchen's words:

The flower pots in my window  
 I watered with tears, ah me,  
 when in the early morning  
 I picked these flowers for thee.

Not sooner in my bedroom  
 the sun's first rays were shed  
 than I in deepest sorrow  
 sat waking in my bed.

But Gretchen's recollection of Faust is a memory, and memories are incomplete and imperfect, so the reminiscence of Scene 1 through the tones of the waltz is distorted – it is no longer a waltz but the faded and melancholy memory of one (Ex.16). The tempo is slower and is crotchet, rather than quaver, based, the pizzicato contrabass notes are infrequent, there are suspensions and pauses composed into the music as if Gretchen has lost her train of thought, for example from the third to fourth bar of the section, while the F major tonic of the scene is not accomplished until the sixth bar of the recollection. Thus because the waltz style is used not as a waltz, as a popular

dance form, Schumann has reduced the waltz genre to tendencies and tones, the modification of which connotes ideas and associations through its previously independent generic existence – the hallmark of the genre transcending *Roman*.

Ex.16 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 2, b.40-47

Der Viertel wie vorher

**B**

The F major waltz-recollecting middle section of Scene 2 ends abruptly as Gretchen suddenly bursts into the passionate cry of “Save me from shame and death in one!” (Ex.18) with a theme that recalls Gretchen’s line from Scene 1 of “Let us soon meet again!” (Ex.17) suggesting that her dramatic plea is directed not only to the Mater Dolorosa, but Faust as well. The ambiguity of this climactic moment is reinforced by the phrase’s mediation between the middle and last sections of the broad ternary form of the scene. Set in F major, the key of the middle section that invoked the memory of Faust, but in the common time of the A minor framing sections in which Gretchen has the been praying to the Mater Dolorosa, Schumann presents an ambiguity not

obviously present in Goethe's original text while simultaneously revealing a further manipulation of genre as a means of subtle narrative communication.

Ex.17 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 1, Gretchen ("Let us soon meet again!"), b.65-6

Gretchen

Auf bal - di - gres Wie - der-sehn!

Orch.

Ad. \*

Ex.18 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 2, Gretchen ("Save me from shame and death in one!"), b.53-4

**Dasselbe Tempo**

Gretchen

auf! hilf! re - tte mich von Schmach und Tod!

Orch.

ff

Scene 3, *Scene in the Cathedral*, is both the conclusion of Part One of the oratorio and the culmination of the generic interaction that has occupied our discussion thus far. The operatic aria that represented the intruding concerns of reality in Scene 1 and became Gretchen's pitiful existence in Scene 2 is developed in the Scene 3 into horror opera, a genre of hyperbole and exaggeration that represents Gretchen's distorted view of reality as she is overwhelmed by her abandonment, pregnancy and her role in the deaths of her mother and brother. The idyllic romance of the waltz does not appear in any form in Scene 3, such is its distance from

Gretchen's present state, while the church music of the Cathedral choir intone segments of the Requiem Mass as the genre that represents reality in this scene. Thus in each scene of Part One of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* the original mental states of the characters are interrupted by foreign thoughts, represented by foreign genres, as in Scenes 1 and 3 reality, in the form of the operatic aria and church music, interject upon a flirtatious waltz and hysterical horror opera respectively, while in Scene 2 a remembered waltz provides a brief respite for Gretchen from her miserable reality.

There are two genres at work in Scene 3 of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*: horror opera and church music, with the former split into two varying types (a) and (b). Generic traits of both these genres are combined in the opening bars of Scene 3 as the bassoons, violas and cellos have an appoggiatura-laden lament topos of Baroque and Viennese classical church music that is set in the style of horror opera through its full orchestral *sf* presentation, coarse repetitions, and overtly dramatic and declamatory manner – stylistic traits far removed from the dignity and poise of sacred genres. Thus Schumann constructs this motif to locate the scene in its cathedral setting through a church music topos but in the theatrical tone of horror opera to illustrate the dramatic character of Scene 3, a fine example of the fusing of generic tendencies that defines the *Roman*. This motif also operates on a second level in that it is derived from Mephistopheles' *Leitmotif*, heard originally in Scene 1 and again in Scene 2 (see 13, Ex.15 and Ex.19), and as such has narrative implications.

Ex.19 Schumann', *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 3, bassoons, violas and cellos b.1-2



These opening bars are the first generic block of *Scene in the Cathedral* that, because of the grossly dramatic and theatrical clangour which dominates the section, shall be called horror opera (a). This is followed by the tense brooding of horror opera (b) at b.8, the style of which is characterised by the taunting of the Evil Spirit in the dramatic declamatory vocal style, through composed style, text painting and irregular phrasing of operatic expression. Later in Scene 3, horror opera (b) will return in a variation with Gretchen's voice alone and a reduced orchestral accompaniment to portray Gretchen's panicked and increasingly maddened attempts to escape from the Evil Spirit's words. The opposite generic block to horror opera is the church music of the Requiem Mass whose stylistic markers include a broad homophonic texture for SATB choir, regular phrasing and thematic repetition. This is not a specific genre of church music but rather a general manner, a few distinguishing tendencies and tones that indicate a sacred choral style. Fischer-Dieskau offers much the same assessment of the first few bars of the *Dies Irae* of the third scene when he tells us that Schumann "does not quote liturgical music but rather imitates its monophonic texture. It seems absurd that he should have been accused of having written music that was overly secular" (Fischer-Dieskau 1988: 205).

The seemingly random, sudden and unprepared changes between the blocks of generic style with their differing tempos, tonal emphases, styles and thematic material offer no structure of formal organisation above the fundamental change between two basic states and a relatively stable tonal basis (See Table 4).

Table 4: Generic division of Scene 3 of Scenes from Goethe’s Faust

Bar	Genre	Key	Participants
1	Horror opera (a) and (b)	D minor	Evil Spirit, Gretchen
48	Church music ( <i>Dies Irae</i> )	D minor	Cathedral Choir, Evil Spirit, Gretchen
91	Horror opera (b)	D minor	Gretchen
100	Church music ( <i>Judex</i> )	D major	Cathedral Choir, Gretchen
132	Horror opera (b)	D minor	Evil Spirit
148	Church music ( <i>Quid sum</i> ) and Horror opera (a)	D minor	Cathedral Choir, Evil Spirit, Gretchen

The effect is akin to that of the second movement of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony as described by Micznik: “The idea of formal “unsystematic ordering,” relying upon the erratic mixture of genre, tempo, and units of content becomes part of the larger “connotative plot” which projects the main ideas of disjunction, distortion, seeming antilogic and absurd repetitiveness” (Micznik 1994: 145). Therefore the unpredictable and unbalanced changes between stylistic blocks are a seemingly purposeful technique employed by Schumann to portray the breakdown of Gretchen’s mind in the first person. In other words, the audience observe Scene 3 and Gretchen’s descent into insanity from Gretchen’s perspective. But, as with Scene 1 and the genres of waltz and operatic aria, Schumann’s communication of drama is to be understood through the interaction and relationships that develop between the tendencies of his genres as the scene progresses, rather than their individual states. Thus we observe in *Scene in the Cathedral* that the originally distinct traits of the horror opera and church

music genres gradually merge into a single entity, signalling the combination in Gretchen's mind of her exaggerated hysteria and her reality, a culmination that signals the completion of her fall into madness.

The distinction between the generic blocks of horror opera and church music can be observed at their first clash in the scene. Horror opera, having opened *Scene in the Cathedral* with its cacophonous first style and alternated once with manner (b) restates its opening chromatic pandemonium, the Viennese classical church music topos seen earlier, before giving way once again to horror opera (b) at b.26. The generic tendencies of horror opera (b) are the theatrical vocal style of the Evil Spirit and Gretchen's weaving of ascending and descending declamatory thematic shapes over a generally *pianissimo* accompaniment dominated by tremolando chords and melodic accompanying figures in the strings with woodwind colouration. However at b.48 this nervous dialogue is swept aside by the full chorus, divided woodwind and brass, timpani and arpeggiated scurrying strings of the *Dies Irae*. Opening on a Bb major chord, although it remains in an unconfirmed D minor, the almost monotone phrases of the cathedral choir with block chordal accompaniment of the church music style contrast starkly with the horror opera (b) that preceded it (Ex.20).

Ex.20 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 3, b.45-50

Gretchen

Evil Spirit

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Orch.

Weh! weh,

und äng-stigt dich und sich mit ah-nungs-vo-l-er Ge-gen-wart?

*sf* *p*

**Festes Tempo.**

weh!

*sf* Grimm fasst dich!

*f* Di - es i - rae, di - es il - la

*f* Di - es i - rae, di - es il - la

*f* Di - es i - rae, di - es il - la

*f* Di - es i - rae, di - es il - la

*f*



The choir singing the *Dies Irae* has not been conjured by Mephistopheles nor is it the creation of the Evil Spirit, but the sudden interruption of reality upon Gretchen's plight as the cathedral choir perform parts of the Requiem Mass. However, this coincidence has the unfortunate effect of amplifying the horror of Gretchen's wretched confusion as the words of *Dies Irae*, and later the *Judex*, communicate the unforgiving and threatening liturgy of the Christian faith that all too accurately reflect Gretchen's situation:

***Dies Irae***

Day of wrath, day of anger,  
That day will dissolve the earth in ashes,  
As David and the Sibyl bear witness,  
What dread there will be,  
When the Judge shall come,  
To judge all things strictly.

***Judex***

When the judge takes his place  
What is hidden will be revealed  
Nothing will remain unavenged

The Evil Spirit takes full advantage of this interjection of reality into his taunting of Gretchen, singing alongside the cathedral choir his own threats of burning damnation ("The trumpet! The graves tremble! And your heart from its ashen rest to fiery torment come up recreated trembling too!"). But although the Evil Spirit performs alongside the choir the two generic styles of horror opera and church music are not intertwined as the Evil Spirit's voice is merely superimposed upon the chordal texture of the Requiem Mass. His brief contribution could be removed from the *Dies Irae* passage with no adverse effect upon the self-sufficiency of the music. The matter is less clear with the *Judex* where, after its completion, the choir continue to sing isolated words and phrases during Gretchen's lines "I cannot breathe! The pillars of

the walls are round my throat! The vaulted roof chokes me! – Air!’’. The choir’s continued presence despite the generic change back to horror opera (b) portrays a leakage of reality into Gretchen’s internal torment, but rather than assuage her madness the words of the *Judex* further increase it. Thus Gretchen’s internal torment now contains elements of the real world, her maddened state is gradually merging with reality. This process is completed in *Quid sum*, the third section of church music in the scene where the two previously contrasted and independent worlds of Gretchen’s internal state and external reality are fully amalgamated into a single unity. In other words, her madness, previously stimulated by the Evil Spirit, becomes her reality.

***Quid sum***

What shall a wretch like me say?  
Who shall intercede for me,  
When the just ones need mercy?

The new unity of the tendencies of church music and horror opera in the *Quid sum* at the close of Part One is depicted in the affirmed key of D minor, previously evaded by the *Dies Irae* and *Judex* with the former avoiding a tonic chord and the latter in the tonic major. Meanwhile, the declamatory and emotional vocal style of the Evil Spirit with its thematic shapes and melodic orchestral accompaniment in the bassoons, cellos and contrabasses with colour from the strings is combined with the cathedral choir who chant their chordal liturgy. Alternating between the two generic styles of horror opera (b) and church music a few bars at a time within the overarching phrases, the previously contrasted genres have merged in the *Quid sum* passage, neither holding dominance over the other and both equally necessary for the musical self-sufficiency of the section – to remove either genre would be to irrevocably damage the whole (Ex.21).

Ex.21 Quid sum, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* Scene 3, b.148-62

**Die Viertel wie vorher die Halben**

Evil Spirit

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Orch.

*p* Ihr An-tlitz *cresc.* wen-der Ver-

Quid sum mi-ser tunc dic - tu - rus, quid, quem pa - tro-nem ro-ga - tu-rus?

*p* *cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

*p*

G

klär-te von dir ab, ihr An-tlitz wen-den Ver - klär - te von dir ab,

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

quid sum mi-ser tunc dic - tu - rus,

quid sum mi-ser tunc dic - tu - rus,

quid sum mi-ser tunc dic - tu - rus,

quid sum mi-ser tunc dic - tu - rus,

Scene 3 concludes with the cathedral choir building to a cacophonic *fortissimo* D minor chord that, even without Mephistopheles' chromatic *Leitmotif*, recalls the horror opera (a) start to the scene, a gesture that fully asserts the newfound unity of the genres. As such the originally conflicting reality of the *Dies Irae* and the internal dream-state of Gretchen's despair have been gradually merged into the same generic unit as reality no longer intrudes on Gretchen's insanity, no longer wakes her from her dream-state – reality and Gretchen's insanity are one and the same. Thus Schumann portrays Gretchen's descent into despair and madness through the employment of the genres of horror opera and church music as tendencies and tones, the hallmark of Schlegel's *Roman*, original individual and independent generic states but gradually merged into a single generic entity.

In conclusion, Schumann combined the tendencies of three diverse genres in his C major *Fantasie* to communicate a generic narrative through the interaction of the various traits contributed by each genre – sonata form from the piano sonata, extra-musical narrative from song, and self-contained independence from the lyric miniature. This early primitive use of genre would culminate in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as an exemplar of Schlegel's *Roman* category within which genre transcends into tones and qualities that are deployed to the specific requirements of the work. Equally, Schumann's generic system was encapsulated within *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as the capstone to his previous survey of the span of nineteenth-century genre. As such, Schumann's oratorio fulfils a vital aspect of the definition of the Grand Opus as the culmination of his previous work with individual generic categories in a single overarching composition.

## **Chapter Two: *Frauenliebe und –Leben* and the Fragment**

The unprecedented influence of literature on Schumann's music is most clearly manifested in the composer's setting of literary works. His aspiration of ultimate fidelity to the poetic text resulted in the employment of the Romantic concept of the fragment in his setting of both *Frauenliebe und –Leben* and Goethe's *Faust*. In the former, the fragmented narrative of the poetry is communicated in the songs through a series of interrelated keys that suggest a broader context. For the latter the fragment technique was imposed by Schumann and cultivated to communicate the significantly broader, perhaps universal, scope of Goethe's *Faust* and in doing so ascended to the level of the sublime. In this chapter I will firstly explore Schumann's literary devotion and how this manifested itself in a fervent desire to remain faithful to the spirit of his chosen texts. Following this will be an analysis of Schumann's setting of Chamisso's *Frauenliebe und –Leben* as an application of the fragment to maintain fidelity to the poetic text. This same idea will then be applied to Schumann's setting of Goethe's play as a uniquely faithful representation of this Romantic masterwork as revealed by a comparison with Berlioz's contemporary setting of *Faust*. Finally I shall show how in portraying *Faust*, and specifically Part Two of Schumann's oratorio, through the fragment *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* displayed the concept of the fragmented sublime.

### **Schumann and literature**

Music was far from Schumann's only artistic passion. Of at least equal priority for the composer was literature, so much so that he only decided at the age of twenty

to commit himself fully to becoming a composer over a poet. Having absorbed the classics of literature from his father's bookstore he developed a keen interest in the writings of J.P.F. Richter who wrote under the pseudonym Jean Paul, specifically his novels *Titan* and *Flegeljahre*. The unique and often difficult style of Jean Paul made a great impact on the seventeen-year-old Schumann, especially the author's experimental formal procedures, such as the fragment, that he would later attempt to transfer to music. Schumann himself "tried his hand at a broad range of literary genres: translation, lyric poetry, drama, critique, and confessional memoir" (Daverio 1997: 25), many of which betrayed the young man's enthusiasm for Jean Paul with their purposefully idiosyncratic style. In his song cycles, oratorios and operas, Schumann discovered the arena in which he could combine his literary interests with his chosen musical profession. As such, Schumann's attraction to the song-cycle, manifested predominantly in his 'Year of Song' of 1840-1, was motivated in no small degree by his desire to involve himself once more in the production of poetic works.

Schumann held very strong beliefs on the creation of the *Lied*, maintaining that "a great poem is a necessary condition for a great song...[and although] the song composer's central mission is the preservation of the poem's 'delicate life', this aim was to be fulfilled less through an act of translation than through a subtle recreation of the poem's essence" (Daverio 2001: 772). Such was Schumann's felicity towards the poetic texts he set<sup>6</sup> that Frank Cooper sees fit to place him "half way between the unscrupulously musical Schubert and the almost painfully literary Wolf" (Cooper in *MaHM*: 120), a standard that Schumann later transferred from song to larger dramatic forms, as shall be seen. Indeed, in his review of the Opus 1 *Lieder* of Robert Franz,

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<sup>6</sup> Felicity, however, was not blind adherence to the text but a communication of the spirit of the original text. For Schumann the means of communication could be altered so long as the original message and effect were maintained. Indeed, Schumann often modified his source material for the requirements of a musical translation and often 'improved' his poetic source if he felt the original essence could be aided by his input.

Schumann complemented the young composer for aspiring to “more than well or ill sounding music; he strives to reflect the poem with lifelike profundity” (Schumann in Kolodin 1969: 176), a goal that Schumann himself shared. Schumann’s own fidelity to the poetic source is clearly reflected in his setting of *Frauenliebe und –Leben* through the use of the narrative fragment.

## The Romantic Fragment

The aesthetic of the fragment is that of a momentary, elusive, self-contained splinter from which an unseen whole is implied. The concept is based upon contemporary observations of nineteenth-century life as a collection of disjointed and isolated experiences in contrast to, what was seen as, the complete and integrated nature of life in an antiquated past. The fragment was also the expression of the solitude felt by many nineteenth-century philosophers and artists as isolated individuals, especially within the crowded cities of modern society. The formal construct of the fragment operated by providing an audience with an isolated, self-sufficient and independent fragment, or collection of fragments, of a previously grandiose structure from which the audience may, paradoxically, infer the larger picture for themselves. Friedrich Schlegel’s *Athenaeum Fragments* embodied this concept as the philosopher communicated his thoughts through incomplete and undeveloped statements, almost as if his philosophical outlook had shattered and he had provided his readers with the chipped and broken remains so that they might resurrect the original themselves. Peter Firchow reflected on the distinctive quality of Schlegel’s philosophical fragments when he stated that “surely one of the reasons why the fragments are fragmentary, ruins and not complete edifices, is that Schlegel wants

us to intuit what might have been but never was, wants us to take the fragment and make of it a whole, take the ruin and reconstruct the edifice” (Firchow 1971: 18).

The realisation of the incomplete nature of a fragment, a matter complicated by the necessary self-sufficiency of the fragment, requires that we may observe the fragment in its isolated totality as only then may we infer that it is separated from a greater whole. A nineteenth-century philosopher might say that his life could be viewed as a collection of fragments, but even if these fragments were united they would not be a whole and complete form, but remain a collection of fragments viewed together.

As we previously noted, Schumann’s formal systems were often inspired by the literary constructs of Jean Paul, and the composer’s adoption of the fragment also originated in this poetic source. Schumann transfigured scenes and ideas from Jean Paul’s *Flegeljahre* into the music of his piano cycle *Papillons*, for it is in his piano works of 1833-9 and specifically the cycles that Schumann cultivated his musical interpretation of the fragment. In *Flegeljahre*, Jean Paul “implies that life is a constellation of fragments awaiting the transfiguring touch of the poet” an idea reflected in Schumann’s piano-cycle interpretation of one scene of the novel where “given the brevity of its constituent pieces, many of them tonally open-ended and featuring feigned openings or partial returns, *Papillons* aptly demonstrates the composer’s engagement with the phenomenology of the fragment” (Daverio 2001: 763). However Schumann’s use of the fragment achieves its greatest relevance to our exploration of *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* when he employs it in his song cycles during his *Liederjahr* of 1840. It is within the song cycles that the fragment engages with the poetic narrative to become the narrative fragment – the communication of a drama, not through a moment-by-moment narration, but by the presentation of



isolated, self-contained scenes that lead an audience to construct, through subtle implications, narrative connections in the empty nothingness between these independent moments. As with the piano fragments, the individual *Lieder* are perfectly self-sufficient and may be isolated from the cycle, but the true depth of the fragment is communicated through subtle, almost hidden, connections between the individual songs that inform an audience of a narrative of somewhat larger proportions. Stephen Walsh, in observing the similarities between *Dichterliebe* and *Frauenliebe und –Leben*, describes the former as embodying the aesthetic of the narrative fragment, without ever using the term itself:

In each the emotional drama is sketched in a series of tableaux, like still frames from a cinemafilm, and from each a sequence of events, though not described, can be inferred: the careful use of key-sequence, the importance of the accompaniment and especially of piano postludes and figuration, and not least Schumann's extra-ordinary flair for catching in music the precise spirit of the words he set (Walsh 1971: 52).

The concept of “still frames from a cinemafilm” is of great relevance to *Frauenliebe und –Leben* and to our later study of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* where Schumann isolates individual scenes from the complete span of the original play.

### ***Frauenliebe und –Leben* and the narrative fragment**

Schumann's song-cycle *Frauenliebe und –Leben* op. 42 (“A Woman's Life and Love”), composed in July of his *Liederjahr* 1841, was based upon a poetic cycle of the same name by Adelbert von Chamisso (1790-1838). The poetic source concerns itself with the story of a nameless working class woman, perhaps a maidservant, who has fallen in hopelessly in love with a man, also unnamed, beyond

her reach in terms of both class and wealth<sup>7</sup>. The first two poems of the original nine concern themselves with her distant adoration of the man, the third with her disbelief that he has declared he loves her also. From this point the narrative leaps in great bounds from her obsession with her wedding ring, to her wedding day – poems iv) and v) respectively – to her realisation she is pregnant, and her adoration of her newborn child in vi) and vii), her confused anger at her husband for dying in viii) before the final poem in which the woman passes on what she has learned from life to her now adult daughter. The ninth and final poem is a simultaneously melancholy and uplifting epilogue summarised in the double-edged advice that “Happiness alone is love,/ Love alone is happiness”. Schumann chose not to set the poem ix) of Chamisso’s cycle and in doing so the composer curtailed Chamisso’s emotional journey through the disbelieving joy of romance, the elation of motherhood, the sudden pain of bereavement, and the temperance of grief (poem ix) so that his cycle closes with the desperate sadness of her husband’s death in the eighth poem.

Chamisso’s nine poems recount almost the entire life of a young servant girl and the lessons she passes on to her daughter, not by laboriously listing the events of her life or even setting the important moments, but by composing several seemingly inconsequential scenes that imply a wider story. For example, *Ich kann’s nicht fassen, nicht glauben* finds the young woman *recounting* the moment that the man she loves tells her he loves her also, whereas a different poet might have set the moment itself. In the same way, *Helft mir, ihr Schwestern* is the woman’s wedding day, but not the actual wedding; it is her plea to her sisters to help her prepare for the ceremony. Meanwhile in song iv) of the cycle, *Du Ring an meinem Finger*, we discover she is

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<sup>7</sup> The social status of the protagonist of Chamisso’s poetry is not explicitly stated but may be inferred from the reference to herself in the second poem as a ‘niedre Magd’ (‘lowly maid’) and her statement in the third poem that their love ‘kann ja nimmer so sein’ (‘can never be’). Also, the woman acts with absolute servility towards the man and displays a continuing disbelief that he would choose her for a partner suggesting that the poet’s subject is in love with a man of a much higher social status.

engaged to the man she loves only through her eulogising about the ring he has given her, while the birth of their child is missed completely, jumping instead from her husband's realisation she is pregnant in song vi) *Süsser Freund, du blickest*, to her playing with the child in *An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust*. As such the significant events of the woman's life are implied by other, seemingly inconsequential moments, with the greater story discerned from these isolated narrative fragments. Schumann's creed of ultimate fidelity to his poetic text led the composer to construct his songs as musical translations of the narrative fragment to reflect Chamisso's original text.

In the following analysis I will explore Schumann's *Frauenliebe* as a series of narrative fragments and describe how these brief and isolated moments subtly suggest their separation from the broader context of the woman's life. This will principally be achieved by exploring the discrete links between these individual fragments, predominately tonal, that reveal how the isolated moments may in fact be located in an overriding narrative. The tonal analysis of *Frauenliebe* is based upon the observation of the differing forms of fragmentation between *Papillons* and *Frauenliebe und –Leben*. In *Papillons* themes are presented unfinished and undeveloped, tonalities unestablished and unfulfilled, recapitulations and recollections ambiguous and insecure, structures directionless and mosaic-like with formal misdirection, feints, and allusions. *Papillons* communicates a moment-by-moment incompleteness, the continual frustration and avoidance of small and large-scale unities. In *Frauenliebe* and *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* however, musically the works are relatively complete entities, the insecurities and incompleteness of the fragment being found in the realisation of the isolation of these complete entities from a broader narrative whole. Both methods embody the aesthetic of the fragment but in different incarnations: *Papillons'* fragmentation is immediate and unavoidable whereas in

*Frauenliebe* it is subtle and understated. The fragmentation of *Frauenliebe* is not to be found in every bar, but in the overriding tonal structures that are seemingly independent but adroitly undermined and weakened to suggest the broader context of the narrative beyond that presented in the *Lieder* texts. The justification for Schumann's subtle fragmentation of *Frauenliebe*, as opposed to the intrusive fragmentation of *Papillons*, is to be found in the composer's fidelity to his poetic source. Chamisso's poems from *Frauenliebe*, as discussed above, do not portray the protagonist's entire life but isolated moments, moments from which may be inferred the events surrounding those narrated. Thus Schumann does not invoke the continuous fragmentation of *Papillons* for his setting of Chamisso's poem cycle, but employs tonality in the same manner in which Chamisso utilizes his narrative: Schumann presents tonal entities complete unto themselves but alluding to a context from which they have been separated. That Schumann used tonality in this way may be discerned from Barbara Turchin's observation that

Schumann, along with his fellow song reviewers on the staff of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, were the first (and perhaps the only) group during the nineteenth-century to stress the desirability of musical as well as poetic coherence and integrity in a song cycle. More specifically, to all the commentators in this group, close key relationships between adjacent songs constituted the primary means of musical coherence (Turchin in *NcM* VIII: 232).

Therefore Schumann brings coherence to *Frauenliebe* through tonality, but it is a coherence that alludes to incompleteness and fragmentation. On the broader scale of the song cycle as a whole, the series of fragments in *Frauenliebe* provides a perspective to the implied greater whole of the overriding narrative of the life of Chamisso's protagonist through the musical implication of events that are not narrated by the poetic source.

For the ease of description, Chamisso's and Schumann's originally nameless serving woman protagonist and her master, the man of her desire, will be addressed as Charitas and Florestan respectively (two relocated members of Schumann's *Davidsbündler*).

Songs i) and ii) of Schumann's *Frauenliebe* cycle finish with a repetition of the same verses that started the poem, a cyclical narrative journey through which each song ends where it began. However, although Chamisso's *Seit ich ihn gesehen* contains this repetition, *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* does not. Schumann changes Chamisso's poem by repeating the first verse of *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* ("He, the most wonderful of all,/ How gentle and how loving!"<sup>8</sup>) at the conclusion and then the second line of this verse once more. This potentially interrupts the narrative thread of Chamisso's poem-cycle as in the first two songs Charitas, while admiring the object of her affection from afar, is resigned to never obtaining him. She even goes so far as to say she would welcome his marriage to another woman in song ii): "Only the worthiest woman of all/ May your choice elate,/ And I shall bless that exalted one/ Many thousands of times./ Then shall I rejoice and weep,/ Blissful, blissful shall I be,/ Even if my heart should break,/ Break, O heart, what does it matter?". However the third poem, *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben*, has a sudden contrast to Chamisso's last verse of the previous poem as Charitas describes her amazement that Florestan loves her also. Schumann's return to the opening verse of *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* at its conclusion destroys Chamisso's progression of poem ii) from Charitas' celebration of Florestan's brilliance to the sweet melancholy of imagining her love happy in another woman's arms and therefore prevents the

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<sup>8</sup> Schumann's interpretation of Chamisso's text is translated by Richard Strokes.

ensuing contrast with the first lines of *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben*: “I cannot grasp it, believe it,/ A dream has beguiled me;/ How could he, of all men,/ Have exalted and favoured poor me?”. By repeating the first verse at the close of the poem, *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* becomes self-contained and emotionally closed with the words and music of the start returning at the close of the song in opposition to the narrative flow and progression in Chamisso’s original text. However, Schumann’s seeming disruption of his poetic source and creation of an emotionally closed song is not quite so equivocal. Although Schumann recalls the music of the first verse (Ex.22) for its repetition at the end of the poem he recalls it, at first, in C major, achieved through a pianistic interlude of a descending cycle of fifths (A-D-G-C major), returning to the original Eb major material in the third bar of the recapitulation (Ex.23).

Ex.22 Schumann’s *Frauenliebe und –Leben*, song ii), b.1-5

Innig, lebhaft.

Er, der Herrlichste von Allen, wie so

Piano

*p*

*f*

mil - de, wie so gut!

Ex.23 Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -Leben*, song ii), b.57-60

Er, der Herr-lich-ste von Al-len, wie so mil-de, wie so gut!

Piano

The effect of this brief C major inflection at the repeat of 1<sup>st</sup> strophe is twofold: firstly it acts to add an element of uncertainty to Charitas' repetition of "He, the most wonderful of all,/ How gentle and how loving!" as the melody is transposed down a minor third into a distantly related key of the tonic – there is now doubt in the statement – while at the same time Schumann adds a seventh to the chord to further increase its harmonic insecurity. Secondly, C major bears a significant relationship with the succeeding song, *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben*, that starts in C minor and concludes in C major, a relationship that will be explored presently. Also, to further mitigate the recall of the first verse of *Er, der Herrlichste von allen*, Schumann concludes the song, after the vocalist has completed her role, with a four bar piano coda in an acutely differing style. The preceding pulsating quaver chords are replaced by several delicate and overlapping chromatic lines of imitative counterpoint that extend the range of the accompaniment a full fourth above its previous extent to Eb<sup>3</sup> (Ex.24).

Underpinning the surprising chromaticism of this coda is a vaguely projected Eb major, the tonic of the song, which is unconvincingly achieved in the final two bars through a chromatically blurred dominant ninth. Schumann's C major recapitulation and chromatic coda reinstate Chamisso's original narrative progression, albeit far more subtly. Indeed, the idea of the fragment inherent in Chamisso's poetic progression is both maintained and increased by Schumann's alterations. As we observed, the philosophical fragment is not only a separated part of a whole, as Chamisso's poems are, but is also independent and seemingly whole within itself. As such, by increasing the independence of *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* with only hints and allusions to a grander context (the repetition of the first verse in a harmonically distorted rendering and the concluding of the song in a chromatically weakened tonic), Schumann further enforces the communication of Chamisso's text through the philosophy of the fragment.

Schumann uses much the same form of fragmentation again in the third poem of the cycle, *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben*, where he repeats the first strophe with its emotional context at the close of the song. Just as in *Er, der Herrlichste von*



*allen* this repeat disrupts Chamisso's sense of emotional progression in *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben* but, as with the second song, this repetition is modified by a communicative piano coda and harmonic significances to once more faintly suggest a greater world than that confined within this seemingly autonomous *Lied*.

Chamisso's original:

I cannot grasp it, believe it,  
     A dream has beguiled me;  
 How could he, of all men,  
     Have exalted and favoured poor  
     me?

He said, I thought,  
     'I am yours forever,'  
 I was, I thought, still dreaming,  
     After all, it can never be.

O let me, dreaming, die,  
     Cradled on his breast;  
 Let me savour blissful death  
     In tears of endless joy.

Schumann's version:

I cannot grasp it, believe it,  
     A dream has beguiled me;  
 How could he, of all men,  
     Have exalted and favoured poor  
     me?

He said, I thought,  
     'I am yours forever,'  
 I was, I thought, still dreaming,  
     After all, it can never be  
     After all, it can never be.

O let me, dreaming, die,  
     Cradled on his breast;  
 Let me savour blissful death  
     In tears of endless joy.

"I cannot grasp it, believe it,  
     A dream has beguiled me;  
 How could he, of all men,  
     Have exalted and favoured poor  
     me?

I cannot grasp it, believe it,  
     A dream has beguiled me.

The piano coda, in C minor, softens the tonic of the repeat of the first strophe by replacing the harsh staccato of the block chords with a gentle swaying motion between the chords of C minor and F major before the vocal enters for its final statement of "I cannot grasp it, believe it,/ A dream has beguiled me". This is followed by the piano affecting a final, chromaticised, plagal cadence that comes to rest upon C major, rather than minor, offering the clue that Charitas, after all, has not

been beguiled. The resolution of the final cadence onto C major, a key first heard in the previous song to the words “He, the most wonderful of all”, tells us that Charitas is right to consider Florestan “wonderful” and that her belief they could not be together and that she was dreaming when he told her “I am yours forever”, represented by the key of C minor, was mistaken. Schumann’s use of tonality to project the aesthetic of the fragment is, in *Ich kann’s nicht fassen, nicht glauben*, much the same as *Er, der Herrlichste von allen*, as the composer uses the relationship of the tonic of the *Lied* with its tonal relations featured in other songs to suggest grander structures beyond the limits of the small and seemingly independent fragment.

In *Helft mir, ihr Schwestern* Schumann pursues a different method of providing both the independence and allusion to a broader whole that describes the narrative fragment. The fifth song of the cycle is the most tonally secure of the cycle thus far, dedicated to Bb major, albeit with a brief foray into Gb major for Charitas’ concluding regretful aside to her sisters that she must take leave of them to live with her husband. However, this brief moment of sadness and Gb major does not significantly distract the bride or the tonality from its jubilant Bb, as shown in Schumann’s repetition of “As I joyfully take leave of you” after the Gb major tangent in a solid Bb. The coda, a solo piano wedding-march variant of the opening vocal melody, closes with a V-I cadence onto a Bb chord, albeit with a D in the bass. This first inversion finish serves to faintly mitigate the tonality by avoiding a complete rest as there is still the future of the couple’s life together to consider. The D bass note of this final chord also acts, as shall be seen, as a dominant pivot to the new tonal world of G major in *Süsser Freund, du blickest*. Thus again we see such a superficially

secure and independent song has in this final assertion of the tonic a slight mitigation that intimates, at the completion of the fragment, that there is a larger entirety beyond.

The most poignant use of the narrative fragment in *Frauenliebe* is to be found in the mournful final *Lied* of the cycle, *Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan*, which describes Charitas' desolation in the wake of Florestan's death. The song itself ends after twenty-two bars, marked by a double-bar line and change of time and key signature to prepare what can only be described as a postlude to the entire *Frauenliebe und -Leben* cycle. Here Schumann recapitulates the accompaniment, without melody, of the opening song *Seit ich ihn gesehen* in Bb major, the tonic of the cycle. The events of the narrative thus far render this simple, halting, chordal accompaniment with an unprecedented tenderness as Schumann illustrates, with the most economic of means, the depth of Charitas' loss. The exact size of the narrative leap from the close of the seventh song where Charitas recognises Florestan's face in that of her newborn child to the death of her husband cannot be discerned exactly, but a chronological break of some time must be assumed. Thus songs vii) and viii) represent two moments extracted from vastly separated sections of an overarching narrative. The exact recapitulation of the harmonic accompaniment of the first song in the last with a musical, emotional and poetic context independent from its original form alludes to this distance, the unspoken years spent between Charitas, Florestan and their child and in doing so renders this postlude as the fragment incarnate. Firstly, the postlude is a part functioning isolated from, and yet reliant and alluding to, the remaining songs of the cycle by virtue of its employment of material from a previous fragment. Secondly, the allusion to events and emotions of the years of Charitas' life not communicated by the fragments of *Frauenliebe* provides a perspective to a greater context beyond that immediately presented by the fragments themselves.

In the moments discussed above Schumann composes suggestions of a greater whole into the individual songs, but from a broader perspective we can observe that *Frauenliebe* is split into two tonal sections, that in each of these sections is a symmetrical pattern of organisation, and that beneath this symmetry lies specific narrative and tonal relationships between the individual songs. These levels of organisation serve to subtly present the narrative fragments of the individual songs as the faintly interconnected parts of a cycle.

There is an overarching tonal scheme that runs throughout the whole *Frauenliebe* cycle. The first section, songs i) to v), trace a tonal arch of Bb-Eb-Cm-Eb-Bb while the second section, songs vi) through viii), have a G-D-Dm tonal progression with a Bb major postlude to end the cycle in its tonic. This tonal plan is not an arbitrary structure but reflects, on a broad scale, the literary connections of Chamisso's poems so that poetic relationships are reflected in tonal relationships. The *Frauenliebe* cycle as a whole is divided into two tonal sections to reflect the narrative division of the poetic cycle; Charitas' life before and after marriage. Schumann illustrates Charitas' extensive change of circumstances and disposition – from the doubt and worry of the past to the optimism and security of her marriage – through a complete change of tonality from Bb major with two flats, to G major with one sharp. Schumann achieves this change, as we saw above, by finishing *Helft mir, ihr Schwestern* on a first inversion tonic chord (Bb major) so that the D in the bass acts as both a close to the fifth song and as a pivot note to the G major of the seventh song. The change of tonality to reflect Charitas' change of circumstances and the pivot method by which it is achieved display a beautifully poetic use of the narrative fragment.

Below the surface of this tonal division can be found a symmetrical organisation in each of the two sections of *Frauenliebe*. This symmetry is focused on the central song of each tonal section, songs iii) and vi), that possess important narrative moments and are therefore set as important tonal moments, musical pivots framed by the surrounding songs. *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben* marks the boundary between Charitas' disbelief and realisation that she may actually attain the man she desires and as such is the C minor centrepiece in the symmetrical pattern of keys of the first section of *Frauenliebe* (Bb-Eb-Cm-Eb-Bb). The two songs that frame this C minor pivot, *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* and *Du Ring an meinem Finger*, share a closely related narrative topic as *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* sees Charitas distantly celebrating Florestan's brilliance, while *Du Ring an meinem Finger* rejoices in the union of the two lovers as signified by her "golden little ring". Schumann represents these narrative correspondences musically through an identical tonic (Eb major) and form (rondo – ABACA), while again the first verse is recapitulated as the final verse but with harmonic deviances from the original to mitigate the affirmation of the tonic before its final cadence. These two songs are so strongly reminiscent of one another that Graham Johnson came to the conclusion that "it was clearly part of Schumann's plan for this cycle that the second and fourth songs, separated by a C minor scherzo, should be mirror images of each other...It is as if Schumann has adapted the material of the second song in order to make the fourth" (Johnson 1999: 38).

In the same way that section one pivots around *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben*, section two, songs vi) to viii), pivots around *An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust* which is framed by *Süsser Freund, du blickest* and *Nun hast du mir den ersten*

*Schmerz getan*. Harmonically the seventh song bears a close relationship with both vi) and viii) in a G major, D major, D minor pattern (albeit with a postlude return to Bb at the close of the cycle) while the swift tempo of song vii) contrasts with the *Langsam* and *Adagio* of the framing *Lieder*. Poetically, as with *Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben*, song vii) marks a watershed, this time Charitas' realisation that Florestan is no longer the most important person in her life. Chamisso's text of *An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust* finds Charitas enraptured by her new born child ("I thought myself rapturous,/ But now am delirious with joy./ Only she who suckles, only she who loves/ The child that she nourishes;/ Only a mother knows/ What it means to love and be happy"), the sentimental nature of which leads Schumann to compose a nursery rhyme-like song, sweetly diatonic and repetitive in both harmony and melody. Schumann's superficial setting of this *Lied* acts as a perfect balance to the intense emotion of *Süsser Freund, du blickest* and the poignancy of *Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan* that frame the seventh song.

Below the symmetrical patterns of the two tonal sections of *Frauenliebe* there is a series of subtle harmonic relationship between individual songs that suggest narrative connections like those observed above between songs ii) and iv), and vi) and vii). For example, it would seem that the desperate longing of *Seit ich ihn gesehen* ("All else is dark and pale/ Around me,/ I would rather weep/ Quietly in my room") is countered in the second song, *Er, der Herrlichste von allen*, by Charitas' celebration of Florestan's wonder in her eyes ("Just as there in the deep-blue distance/ That star gleams bright and brilliant,/ So does he shine in my sky,/ Bright and brilliant, distant and sublime."). However, there are stanzas in song ii) that echo the melancholy of *Seit ich ihn gesehen*, for example "Wander, wander on your way,/ Just to gaze on your

radiance,/ Just to gaze on in humility,/ To be but blissful and sad!”, and as such the closely related emotions of sadness at an unobtainable love and celebration of their distant brilliance are reflected by Schumann in the setting of songs i) and ii) in the closely related keys of Bb and Eb major respectively. Another example of this is the connection of a Bb major tonic between the first and fifth songs, *Seit ich ihn gesehen* and *Helft mir, ihn Schwestern*, to portray the poetic correspondences between the two as each concerns itself with poetic issues of sight, family, and Charitas’ fear she is not worthy of Florestan.

Another harmonic connection in Schumann’s *Frauenliebe* can be found between songs ii) and vii), the second and penultimate songs of the cycle. The connection is one of topic and tone as Chamisso echoes the opening lines of *Er, der Herrlichste von allen*, “He, the most wonderful of all,/ How gentle and how loving!” with those of *An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust*, “On my heart, at my breast,/ You my delight, my joy!”, the former about the man she has fallen in love with, the latter concerning itself with the child that has eclipsed Florestan, now her husband, in her affections. In fact Schumann increases the literary symmetry of the two songs as he repeats the line quoted above at the close of *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* before the piano coda and in doing so matches Chamisso’s use of the opening lines of *An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust* as both the first and last verses of the poem. To reflect these correlations Schumann employs a similar jubilant tone for both songs, but it is in their respective codas that these *Lieder* are truly revealed as subtly interconnected. Both songs conclude with a disorientating chromaticism and specifically a single chromatic line in the final bars that ascends in *Er, der Herrlichste von allen* (Ex.24 ) and descends in *An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust* (Ex.25). Thus

song vii) of the *Frauenliebe* cycle affects a symmetry with the second *Lied* of the set as a surprising discovery of joy.

Ex.25 Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -Leben*, song vii), b.39-41.

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It is divided into two systems. The first system is marked 'Langsamer' and 'Piano'. It features a treble staff with a melody and a bass staff with a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the piece with similar notation. There are some markings like 'p' and 'f' indicating dynamics, and some notes are marked with an asterisk (\*).

### Scenes from Goethe's *Faust* and the narrative fragment

In one sense, Schumann's settings undeniably create the impression of a series of discrete fragments, but so too does the drama that occupied Goethe intermittently from 1770 until 1831, the year before his death...the *Faust* scenes disclose an affinity with the novel, the genre whose "wholeness" is not that of the harmonious unity, but rather that of the heterogeneous totality (Daverio 1997: 369)

The song cycles, and especially *Frauenliebe*, may be considered as preliminary experiments in Schumann's use of the narrative fragment to communicate a staggered narrative. Enlarged to encompass the massive boundaries of Goethe's epic drama, Schumann employed the narrative fragment by isolating a mere seven scenes from the original *Faust* play for his oratorio, literally as fragments of a greater whole. Where with Chamisso's poetic cycle the fragments were intended and provided by the



author, with *Faust* Schumann shattered Goethe's text himself and selected those fragments he felt communicated the original spirit of the drama. In the following section I will assess how Schumann's fragmentation of Goethe's *Faust* was motivated by the composer's resolve to remain faithful to the text, firstly by examining the original play as a whole, secondly with an analysis of Schumann's setting in relation to Berlioz's contemporary *Faust* composition. Then I will analyse Part Two of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* in the context of the narrative fragment before finally examining how this resulted in the creation of the fragmented sublime.

Lesley Sharpe raises a pertinent question of Goethe's *Faust* that bears a distinct relationship with the issue of Schumann's setting of the text:

[The] long gestation period [of Goethe's *Faust* from 1773 to 1832] has led many critics to assert that *Faust* cannot be understood as a unified work... Given the length of the play, some 12,000 lines, it is rarely performed complete. The habit, begun with the first performance in 1817, of extensive cutting has doubtless contributed to the perception that the play has no inherent structure. Given that *Faust* does not observe the traditional unities of action, time and place canonized by Aristotle, it is worth considering just what kind of tragedy it really is (Sharpe 2002: 89-90).

Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, composed from 1844-53, has often been criticised in the exact same manner. Many critics assert the impossibility of understanding it as "a unified work" while it is frequently performed only in individual parts and sections, justified by Schumann's own words that the whole could be performed only as 'a curiosity'. These criticisms are founded in Schumann's selection of only seven scenes from the 12,000 lines of Goethe's original text in the purposeful dismantlement of a monumentally important work of the period.

Schumann's isolation of these seven scenes can therefore be recognised as the extension of an integral characteristic of Goethe's original play, an extension that led Schumann's setting to be criticised on exactly the same grounds. That Schumann

isolated these scenes as fragments rather than simply choosing those scenes he felt warranted musical interpretation can be observed in the manner in which he transferred Goethe's scenes from play to libretto with little consideration for narrative continuity. The result is a libretto that confounds narrative sense, as dramatically significant, if not vital, events happen offstage with only fleeting references to them in the text of the oratorio. The discontinuity this creates is partly motivated by Schumann's belief that his audience know the original text well enough to compensate for the dramatic fissures, but his choice also reflects the structural disunities of Goethe's original thus displaying the composer's fidelity to the spirit of the literary text. Indeed, in the setting of his seven chosen scenes, Schumann even increases the sense of disconcerting narrative jumps between scenes through the juxtaposition of generic contrasts. This generic clash between the Goethe fragments is achieved, as we observed in Chapter One, through an extension of the techniques Schumann employed in his *Fantasie* to communicate narratives through generic connotation and suggestion. The generic, as well as structural, fragmentation of *Faust* can be observed in the simplest of comparisons between the first and last scenes of the oratorio. Scene 1 is, as we have seen, conversational and draws upon the tendencies of the predominantly secular genres of waltz and opera to communicate the scene's atmosphere of romantic and flirtatious exchanges between Faust and Gretchen. Scene 7 however is separated into seven numbers and is over seven times the length of Scene 1 at around fifty minutes. Stylistically, although synthesised with the traits of various secular genres, the scene is dominated by neo-baroque sacred music and a distinctly exalted and dignified tone, as we shall observe in Chapter Three. This elevated discourse of *The Transfiguration of Faust* is in sharp contrast to the base flirting of the two lovers in *Scene in the Garden* and reflects the universal message

inherent in the text, the grandiose statements Goethe is communicating, as opposed to the shallow prattling of Scene 1. Thus we see Schumann using his generic breadth, cultivated in his encyclopaedia of genres, further to enhance use of the narrative fragmentation of Goethe's play and, by extension, his oratorio.

A secondary effect of Schumann's fragmentation of Goethe's epic play can be intuited from Friedrich Schlegel's *Athenaeum Fragment* No.24: "Many of the works of the ancients have become fragments. Many modern works are fragments as soon as they are written" (Schlegel in Firchow 1971: 164). The first half of this philosophical fragment asserts the opinion that the effect of time upon the originally complete works of the ancients has led to their dilapidation to the extent that, in the modern day, these works exist in the state of tattered fragments, the remnants of a once great whole, or that what is present is only partly understood by modern audiences. The second half of Schlegel's statement offers the assertion, in contrast to the first, that many nineteenth-century works were conceived as fragments in their original form to reflect the fragmented age in which they were created. Schumann's treatment of Goethe's *Faust* is a reversal of these thoughts. *Faust* was undeniably modern at its inception, part of which entailed its intrinsic fragmentation detailed above. But by fragmenting the play further, Schumann aged the original into the facsimile of an ancient work. His choice of seven isolated scenes from the whole of Goethe's play artificially reproduces the decay of time through a purposeful disintegration of the modern original. This exaggerated maturation of Goethe's play to give it the resemblance of the ruins of an ancient work shows the high regard in which Schumann held *Faust*. Indeed, this effect has been increased by the genuine decay of time in that Schumann would have expected his nineteenth-century German audience to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Faust legend and perhaps of Goethe's

*Faust* in particular, but a modern day twenty-first century audience will have relatively little awareness of the legend with a very limited number possessing any direct acquaintance with Goethe's play. Thus where Schumann's disintegration of *Faust* into only seven isolated scenes may perhaps have been compensated for by an audience contemporary to the oratorio's composition in 1853, today Schumann's purposeful deterioration of Goethe's literary classical has rendered the work as dramatically unintelligible to a modern-day audience new to the Faust legend as one of Schlegel's fragmented and dilapidated ancient works.

The selection of seven dismembered scenes from a masterwork of the Romantic generation places Schumann's setting of Goethe's *Faust* as possibly the most innovative approach attempted, Liszt's symphonic portraits aside. All other operatic settings have either omitted one of the two parts of the original, have tried to force too large a continuous and dramatically logical narrative into a single evening's libretto, or have merely altered the original to their own requirements. Perhaps only the setting of a *Faust* opera over several evenings in the manner of Wagner's *Ring* cycle would be a more faithful approach to Goethe's original text than Schumann's own. By fragmenting Goethe's *Faust*, Schumann not only addressed the problem of condensing the huge proportions of Goethe's drama into a single evening's entertainment, if it were to be performed as such, but also remained faithful to the disjointed spirit of the original text while simultaneously elevating Goethe's poetic source to the status of an illustrious but incomplete work of ancient design. I shall now explore Schumann's fragmentation of Goethe's original, the scenes he chose and those he omitted, followed by a comparison with a contemporary setting of the same original text by Berlioz to provide a context for Schumann's achievement.

The scenes that Schumann chose for his oratorio were, from Part 1 of Goethe's play, an amalgamation of *A Garden* and *A Garden House* for Scene 1, *The Ramparts* and *Cathedral* as Scenes 2 and 3 respectively, and from Part 2 of the tragedy, *A Pleasant Landscape*, *Midnight*, *Greater Outer Court of the Palace* for Scenes 4, 5 and 6 respectively, while for Schumann's grandiose Scene 7, Goethe's *Mountain Gorges* and *Heaven* were combined. A detailed examination of the exact textual changes Schumann made to these scenes will not illuminate our argument further other than to note that Schumann's fidelity to Goethe far outweighs his divergences<sup>9</sup>. A more enlightening examination will be the study of the motivations behind Schumann's selection of a mere seven scenes for his oratorio, the omission of the vast majority of Goethe's original, and the effect this has upon the narrative.

The opening of Schumann's oratorio in Goethe's *A Garden* scene sees the narrative begin halfway through Faust's seduction of Gretchen at the moment where she allows herself to believe Faust's declaration of love. In introducing the drama at this point Schumann has disregarded a full twelve scenes and the Prologue of the original text. The Prologue is perhaps an excusable omission despite the setting of the context of Faust's pact with the Devil and Goethe's assertion of the sympathy between Mephistopheles and God in their lament at the inactivity and languor of man. However, in the exclusion of the four scenes following the Prologue Schumann deprives his audience of the introduction to the constantly striving yet never sated Faust who, in desperation, nearly commits suicide, not to mention his first encounter with Mephistopheles and the striking of the pact between them, the event that stimulates the remainder of the tale. By removing this most vital aspect of the narrative, the very basis of the Faust legend, Schumann undermines all motivation for

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<sup>9</sup> The changes Schumann made to these scenes he selected are, for the majority, merely cuts and changes of order, with a minor amount of textual alteration.

Faust and Mephistopheles' actions. Schumann, we must assume, is relying on his audience's awareness of the Faust legend to fill in the foundation of the narrative that he has omitted. That he makes absolutely no allowance for this omission, other than the oblique references already contained in Goethe's original scenes set by Schumann reinforces the aesthetic of the narrative fragment as teleological narrative progression is discarded in favour of isolated and indirectly connected moments. This is exemplified in the opening lines of Schumann's oratorio:

**Faust:** You knew me again, you little angel, as soon as you saw  
me enter the garden?

**Gretchen:** Didn't you see me cast down my eyes?

**Faust:** And the liberty that I took you pardon? The impudence  
that reared its head when you lately left the cathedral  
door.<sup>10</sup>

That we have entered upon a story already in flow is obvious; that this is an isolated segment of a greater tale is inferred. Here Schumann is borrowing a technique he observed in the works of Jean Paul by starting his narrative somewhere in the centre of his tale and in so doing confounds the whole concept of nineteenth-century narrative as a succession of events leading logically from one to the next in a progression from start to finish. The entrance at a seemingly random point and the dislocation of narrative continuity that this entails immediately throws all expectations of narrative progression into doubt. The fundamental nature of story telling, that it starts at the start, has been discarded and so we have no reason to assume the observance of any other narrative conventions, that there may be no sense of progression between events. The selection of this first fragment, in other words, suggests that the fragments we are provided with will give little indication of how to

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<sup>10</sup> Translated by Louis MacNeice and E.L. Stahl.

assemble the original whole – a totality so shattered and the remaining fragments so small and isolated that the implied whole is beyond reconstruction.

By extracting the setting of the narrative, Schumann was free to enter the narrative at any point of the entire play that he chose, although because of the doubt in teleological structures raised by his opening scene we have no reason to form any assumptions from this selection. However, Schumann's selection of a point midway through the seduction of Gretchen in Goethe's *The Garden* is followed by *The Ramparts* where we find Gretchen mourning her abandonment, the progression of which suggests that Schumann will focus his interpretation of *Faust* on the love story between Faust and Gretchen. Therefore, the initially undermined and threatened teleological grounding of 'the start' seems to have been merely uprooted and replanted further down the narrative progression. As such, it appears that, rather than upending narrative progression in his oratorio, Schumann has merely displaced and condensed Goethe's narrative. This is the narrative fragment exemplified, as from the dramatic moments Schumann provides we infer a previous whole that has been shattered, a method used to great effect in the final song of *Frauenliebe*. Thus Schumann uses his fragments of Goethe subtly to allude to the complete whole, and as such we observe the oratorio's scenes progressing from Faust flirting with and declaring his love for Gretchen to finding Gretchen alone and mourning her abandonment with an impending child, from which we may infer that the child is Faust's and it is he who has abandoned her. From this uprooting of Goethe's narrative we can observe that in Schumann's libretto Gretchen, not Faust, is the protagonist of Part One of the oratorio, appearing as she does in all three scenes while Faust is only in the first. Mephistopheles too is, at best, an incidental character in Part One through his one line in the *Scene in the Garden* and his possible appearance in altered form as

the Evil Spirit in *Scene in the Cathedral*. It is Gretchen's fate, her descent into madness, which concerns Schumann's narrative thread, such that it is, in Part One of his oratorio. Schumann's reshaping of the first part of Goethe's play with Gretchen as the main character is perhaps an act of infidelity to the poetic source but can be explained as an act of economy. The selection of only three scenes as fragments to provide a perspective from which to view the whole of Goethe's Part 1 is best achieved from Gretchen's perspective as she lives the main events of the play, rather than reflecting on them at a later time, the role taken by Faust.

The isolation of only seven scenes entails great narrative leaps in Schumann's setting of *Faust*. The largest of these narrative breaks made by Schumann is between Scenes 4 and 5 of his oratorio where he excludes an entire twenty-three of Goethe's scenes, returning only for the last five scenes, four of which he sets. This act guts Part 2 of Goethe's original of all but the very outer scenes, losing in the process the creation and existence of the Homunculus, the *Classical Walpurgis Night* with the Sirens, Sphinxes, Nymphs and various other mythological beasts and characters, Faust's marriage to Helen of Troy and the brief life of their son Euphorion, the winning of the Emperor's land, and the murders of Baucis and Philemon that lead directly to Faust's death. This reduction of Goethe's original text is admittedly extreme, but on inspection all of the omitted scenes appear as a series of tangents from the main body of Faust's constant aspiration toward satisfaction, aided in his quest by Mephistopheles granting his every wish. The symbolic and literary worth of the excluded scenes is undoubted, but in their entirety they can be considered as a long, colourful and eventful, but essentially fruitless journey that meets its conclusion in the scenes set by Schumann. The narrative break between Scenes 4 to 5 of Schumann's oratorio informs Schumann's fragmentation of Goethe's play in that the



composer discarded all but the most vital of aspects of *Faust*, and even some of the significant events too, to convey Goethe's grand tragedy through the most economical of narrative means.

Schumann's fragmentation of Goethe's *Faust* does not suggest a random selection of scenes nor the pure philosophy of the fragment as the complete deconstruction of teleological processes observed in *Papillons* and suggested by the opening scene of the oratorio. Instead *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* projects *Faust* through fragments, but with a simultaneous concern for narrative continuity – the narrative fragment embodied. Schumann's oratorio sketches out the events of the play Schumann felt were integral to the narrative, allowing these fragments to allude to that which was discarded, the superfluous moments ignored and the integral themes retained. The effect is somewhat akin to laying the Bayeux tapestry across the floor of a pitch-black room and then placing candles at vital points to illuminate key moments of the drama. Schumann illuminates isolated and yet self-contained moments of Goethe's grandiose play that, despite their individuality, communicate an overriding narrative through implication and suggestion. We can see that great swathes of the tapestry remain cloaked by darkness but what the candles do illuminate allows us to infer what remains shrouded. As such, we can observe that the narrative fragment Schumann employed in his setting of Chamisso's already fragmented *Frauenliebe und –Leben* was developed and concentrated into his own fragmentation of the overarching narrative of Goethe's *Faust*, a work for which he and the Romantics had deep admiration and respect. His success in communicating the vast expanse of *Faust* was achieved through great economy and the isolation of only vital moments that illuminated a broader context beyond their narrow limits and thus unveiled, through implication, the majestic breadth of Goethe's narrative through individual and isolated

fragments. To provide a context in which to judge Schumann's setting of Goethe's *Faust* we will examine the relative merits of the contemporary attempt of Berlioz to rein Goethe's vast play within a single evening's entertainment.

The score of Berlioz's 'dramatic legend' *The Damnation of Faust* was prefaced by an *avant-propos* in which the composer defended his work against the criticisms of those who deplored the liberties he wielded over Goethe's original masterpiece. In it Berlioz argues that 'far from "mutilating a monument" as his accusers declared he was doing, he was merely performing the usual operations musicians affect on their poetic sources' (Holoman 1989: 375). Indeed, Berlioz argued that Goethe acted no differently than himself by writing his own variation upon a universally owned legend with little fidelity to previous incarnations of Faust, for example Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. Also, Berlioz's *Damnation* is instantly distanced from Goethe's *Faust* by, as the title suggests, the condemnation of his protagonist to the clutches of Hell, while the composer set his tale in Hungary merely so that he might incorporate a previously composed, traditionally Hungarian, Rákóczy March. Meanwhile, the libretto of Berlioz's *Damnation* was in fact an amalgamation of the original Goethe, translated and adapted by Gérard de Nerval, and additions and interpretations by Gandonnière and Berlioz himself. Indeed, Berlioz's dramatic legend was based upon the composer's adapted and reformulated Opus 1 *Huit scènes de Faust* of 1829, around which the remaining scenes of *Damnation* were composed in 1845-6. Finally, for the scenes that Berlioz wrote the librettos for, the composer "probably sketched the music at the same time [as he wrote the librettos]...the implication is that, with a scene in mind, he would allow the music to come before the

words”<sup>11</sup> (Rushton 1975: 131). The simultaneous composition of the music and text, the basing of a new work upon a fifteen year old creation, the combination of four competing authors, and the general air of pragmatism surrounding the composition of Berlioz’s *Damnation* suggests the work of a musical dramatist, rather than the obsessive fidelity of a literary enthusiast such as Schumann. Winton Dean aptly summarises the situation in his review of Berlioz’s *Damnation*:

The story [of Goethe’s *Faust*] is handled in a very casual manner. While unimportant details are expanded, essentials are often abbreviated into obscurity; Faust only signs the deed committing himself to Mephistopheles’ power the moment before starting for the Abyss. In these circumstances any comparison with Goethe would be absurd. We are not much interested in whether Faust is damned or not; nor perhaps was Berlioz. What we have is a series of vignettes – pictures from a *Faust* exhibition (Dean 1993: 205).

In the context of this observation, any comparison with Schumann’s setting of *Faust* would seem to be equally absurd. However, there are some keen correspondences between the Goethe settings of Berlioz and Schumann despite the gulf in approach to the original text. Dean describes Berlioz’s dramatic works, and specifically *Damnation*, in terms strongly reminiscent of the narrative fragment that has dominated our exploration of *Frauenliebe* and *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* in this chapter:

Berlioz presents the curious phenomenon of a composer long-breathed in individual movements yet fragmentary over whole works. While he could prolong a melody or a musical paragraph with unrivalled eloquence, his larger structures are apt to fall into a series of adjacent blocks, with the connections either clumsily handled or omitted altogether. These blocks, often perfectly shaped in themselves, seem to have been conceived without reference to each other. When placed in succession they resemble a string of pearls threaded haphazard, or a window of exquisite stained glass incompletely leaded. It is as if his inspiration were effective only over a certain distance; when it ran dry he could only begin again from scratch.

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<sup>11</sup> Rushton bases this on Berlioz’s words “une fois lancé, je fis les vers qui me manquaient au fur et à mesure que me venaient les idées musicales” [“once I got warmed up, I wrote the lines that were missing as the musical ideas were coming” (translation by Baux, Victoria)].

In *La Damnation de Faust* this tendency is reinforced by special circumstances (Dean 1993: 204).

An argument could be made that Berlioz's dramatic legend does not reflect the aesthetic of the philosophical fragment because, as Dean asserts, Berlioz's fragmented setting of *Faust* is a result of the inability of his inspiration to stretch over large-scale dramatic forms, a problem exacerbated by the circumstances of its composition, rather than as a portrayal of the isolated and disconnected nature of modern life or as a faithful reproduction of the original text. However, a more fundamental and objective basis for disregarding *Damnation* as embodying the fragment may be achieved through a consideration of the effect produced by Berlioz's fragmented approach to *Faust*. As we observed previously, the fragment operates by alluding to a greater whole, the isolated section creating a perspective from which one may imagine a grand context. With Berlioz however, the fragmented scenes do not provide a perspective for a broader view, rather they draw the attention of the audience *into* the object so that the fragment dominates the panorama. Berlioz's attempt to join his widely divergent scenes with linking recitatives and orchestral passages suggests he intended the work to contain a continuous narrative. But by providing these, obviously secondary, connecting moments between the 'big numbers' of *Damnation*, Berlioz concentrates the attention upon the arrival of a dramatic and musically evocative events that are prepared by these linking recitative or orchestral passages. Dean's comparison of *Damnation* to a "string of pearls" seems particularly apt because, as with the relationship between Berlioz's linking passages and 'big numbers', a thread may hold the individual pearls together as a whole but it is otherwise ignored in favour of the pearls upon which all attention is lavished. Therefore the seeming independence belied by subtle allusions to a greater whole beyond that provided of Schumann's *Frauenliebe* and *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* is

replaced in Berlioz's *Damnation* by the complete independence of a series of 'big numbers' that have been tacked together to provide an excuse for their joint presentation. The independence of the musically dramatic scenes of *Damnation* are reflected in the common practice of isolating the Rákóczy March, the Dance of the Sylphs and the Minuet of the Will o' the Wisp as orchestral excerpts for independent concert performance. Thus Berlioz's scenes do not justify the conditions of the narrative fragment because the narrative is the setting and inspiration for the existence of these scenes, rather than whole from which the scenes are extracted. In the narrative fragment the individual fragment is subordinate to the overarching narrative, it alludes to the greater whole to which it belongs, but in Berlioz's *Damnation*, Goethe's narrative is merely the stimulation and excuse for a series of dramatic scenes, the wall on which Berlioz hangs his exhibition. The effect is somewhat akin to the Hollywood blockbuster film consisting of a series of dramatic and showy 'set pieces' strung together through the pretence of a plot – enjoyable the effect may be, but a shallow enjoyment lacking narrative and psychological depth. This position is inadvertently supported by Julian Rushton's defence of Berlioz's *Damnation* with his view that "its freshness of invention and brilliance of execution may not match Liszt's symphony in felicity to Goethe and the thematic coherence, or Gounod's opera as theatrical entertainment, but it is hardly philistine to find Berlioz's work the most enjoyable of the three" (Rushton 2001: 315). Indeed not, but we may make the assertion that Berlioz's priorities in his setting of *Faust* were given over to achievement of a series of superficial and immediate effects strung together on a pretence to Goethe's original play, a work whose main involvement in the *Damnation of Faust* was to fire Berlioz's undoubted musical and dramatic imagination. In comparison to Berlioz's *Damnation*, Schumann's setting of Goethe's *Faust* as a

reflection of the narrative fragment seems particularly commendable by virtue of the composer's fidelity to the author and commitment to conveying the spirit of his poetic source.

Having compared Schumann and Berlioz's interpretations of Goethe's *Faust* and revealed how Schumann purposefully fragmented his poetic source out of a sense of fidelity to the overall narrative of the original text I shall now examine how Schumann composed the concept of the fragment into the scenes he selected. In Part Two of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* the philosophy of the fragment is not to be found in the constant frustration of immediate cohesion, a technique Schumann used in his *Papillons* to reflect the prose of Jean Paul, but in the subtle suggestion of a greater whole from which the individual fragments are isolated, as he did for *Frauenliebe* in response to Chamisso's poetic text. Schumann's fragmented setting of Goethe's *Faust*, an approach suggested by the original text as discussed above, provides a conventional sense of harmonic unity, but just like the tonal symmetries of his *Frauenliebe* cycle it is not a tangible unity. The unity of Schumann's fragmentation is an imaginary one, a projection in the mind of the audience prompted by the independent scenes in a manner that fulfils both sides of the philosophy of the fragment as a dichotomy of the simultaneous isolation of a fragment and yet its allusion to its separation from a greater whole.

In *Frauenliebe* we examined how Schumann employed tonal relations between the songs of the cycle to suggest that, although the songs were seemingly self-contained individually, subtle harmonic connections between songs and symmetrical tonal patterns alluded to the surrounding fragments and also the overriding narrative of the cycle and also events beyond those presented by the

*Lieder*. This incarnation of the fragment illuminates Part Two of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* in exactly the same manner, albeit on a grander scale. That Part Two of Schumann's oratorio is separated from a broader whole is obvious, as Scenes 4 and 6 are tonally open, as opposed to the relative tonal stability of Parts One and Three whose scenes are tonally closed. However, the philosophy of the fragment dictates not only that the fragment be isolated from a broader whole, but also that it is self-sufficient when independent from its origin, an element far harder to observe in the obviously segmented scenes of Part Two of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*.

To portray the fragmentation of the scenes of Part Two from an overriding narrative I shall explore the significance of a group of interrelated keys that occur in Part Two. This approach will not only economise our exploration of Schumann's oratorio but will perfectly illustrate how Schumann made subtle connections between the Scenes and Parts of his oratorio through the use of tonality. Following this examination of the interrelation of the scenes of Part Two within the context of the whole of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* I will then explore the isolation and independence of these scenes. The keys of greatest significance in Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, and specifically Part Two of the oratorio, are F major, C major and Bb major.

The overarching narrative of Goethe's *Faust* from which Schumann dislocated his seven fragments for *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* is represented in a grand tonal plan that sweeps through the entire harmonic progression throughout the three parts of the oratorio. If we take the opening and concluding tonality of each Part, regarding the inner keys of the scenes as digressions from these fundamental keys, we are left with a scheme that spells out a strong F major progression: (Part One) F major – D minor – (Part Two) Bb major – C major – (Part Three) F major – F major. As we can see, Part

Two of the oratorio moves away from the tonic and yet prepares its triumphant return in Part Three. Therefore, by exploring the tonal relations of Part Two we may observe that the tonic is primed but not achieved and from this deduce that when the fragmented scenes of Part Two are isolated from the whole they nonetheless suggest the existence of that whole through their preparation of an unfulfilled tonic.

The main event of Scene 4 is Faust's witnessing of the magnificent glory of the rising sun. The important textual moments of *Ariel Sunrise* regarding the rising of the sun are set to Bb major, the subdominant of the tonic, such as Ariel's statement "now the new-born day appears" with the striking of a Bb chord on "new-born" ("geboren") while his description of the sun's power as "dazzling, deafening, dumbfounding" is likewise in Bb (Ex.26), having been achieved as a sudden climactic tonal diversion from a surging passage of modulation and growth.

Ex.26 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 4, b.238-44

The musical score for Ex.26 is presented in two systems. The first system shows Ariel's vocal line and the Orchestra (Orch.) accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "Au - ge" and the orchestral part has a "cresc." marking. The second system shows Ariel's vocal line and the Orchestra accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "blinz und Ohr er - stau - net -". The orchestral part has a "p" marking. The key signature is B-flat major, indicated by two flats (Bb and Eb) on the staff.

On Faust's awakening, reborn and reinvigorated by the power of Ariel and the spirits of nature, he cries, in a sudden change from G major to Bb major, "Look up at the



peaks!” as the sun provides him with a glorious sight by illuminating the mountains (Ex.27).

Ex.27 Schumann’s *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust*, Scene 4, b.288-91

The musical score for Faust and Orchestra (Orch.) from Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 4, measures 288-91. The score is in B-flat major, 8/8 time. Faust's part is in bass clef, and the Orchestra is in treble and bass clefs. The lyrics are "stre - ben. Hin - auf ge - schaut!". The music features a crescendo and a fortissimo (f) dynamic.

It is the inspiration of this sight and the marvel of nature that inspires Faust to strive ever upwards, to reach for the highest goal, the very virtue for which Heaven redeems him despite his sins. Indeed Scene 7: *Transfiguration of Faust*, and especially the annunciation of the Mater Gloriosa, is prophesied in Scene 4 by the clangour and celebration of the rising of the sun in Bb major. By setting such a fundamentally important event and surrounding references to this event in Bb, Schumann reveals that this key is of vital importance in his overarching tonal structure.

If Faust’s ascension is forecast by Bb major, then his death is both prefigured and enacted in Part Two by the key of C major, the dominant of F. As the four Grey

Women approach Faust's palace in Scene 5 they become excited by the sight of an approaching figure: "Look yonder, look yonder! From afar, from afar, he's coming, our brother, he's coming... Death". After a B major and B minor setting of this sentence the last, and most important, word is issued on an unprepared C major chord first inversion (Ex.28).

Ex.28 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 5, b.110-13

The musical score for Ex.28 shows four staves: Soprano II, Alto I, Alto II, and Orchestra. The key signature is B major (two sharps). The time signature is 8/8. The vocal parts (Soprano II, Alto I, Alto II) all sing the same lyrics: "da kommt er, da kommt er, der Tod!". The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The orchestra part is at the bottom, featuring a piano introduction with a forte (fp) dynamic marking. The music is in a first inversion C major chord.

Likewise, as Mephistopheles is joyfully directing the Lemurs in their measurement of what will be Faust's grave at the start of Scene 6, the Devil cheerfully commands "Let now the longest lie his length down there,/ you others prise away the turf beside him;/ as for your forebears long asleep,/ dig you an oblong, long and deep", all in the key of a jubilant C major. However, contained in C major is not only Faust's death but also his salvation. Faust's speech "A swamp along the mountains' flank/ makes all my previous gains contaminate./ My deeds, if I could drain this sink, would culminate as well as terminate" starts in a weak C major, frequently corrupted by chromaticisms

and deviations, but C major is unambiguously established at Faust's words "The traces of my earthly days can never/ sink in the aeons unaware" (Ex.29).

Ex.29 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 6, b.189-95

The musical score shows Faust's recitative in C major. The lyrics are: "Es kann die Spur von meinen Erden-ta-gen nicht in Ae-o-nen un-ter geh'n." The orchestra provides harmonic support with chords and a C pedal in octaves in the 2nd bassoon, timpani, and contrabasses. A fermata is placed over the final note of Faust's phrase.

Meanwhile, Faust's death soon after this C major assertion is depicted by Schumann through a series of diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords underpinned by a C pedal in octaves in the 2<sup>nd</sup> bassoon, timpani and contrabasses while Mephistopheles, once more in the halting C major of Faust's speech pays testament to Faust's unsatisfied life: "By no joy sated, filled by no success,/ still whoring after shapes that flutter past,/ this last ill moment of sheer emptiness -/ the poor man yearns to hold it fast". Thus it is in Faust's death that his salvation is located, as revealed in Schumann's association of the topics of eternal life, striving and death, all within the range of the key of C major. Finally, Scene 6 and Part Two of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* concludes with the Chorus singing "It is fulfilled!", a phrase which closes on a strong assertion of a healthy C major, which in the context of the significance of tonality in Schumann's oratorio denotes both Faust's death and deliverance, before a final fifteen bars of pure and unmitigated C major tonality prepares the beginning of Scene 7, *Transfiguration of Faust*, in the oratorio tonic of F major.

As we observed in the song cycle *Frauenliebe*, Schumann reflects the narrative events of his fragments primarily through tonal means as a method of providing continuity while simultaneously alluding to the aesthetic of the fragment. We may therefore observe that in the context of the Bb major of Scene 4, in which Faust's characteristic striving is stimulated by a vision of the glory of nature, and the correspondences between the occurrences of C major with the topics of Faust's death and salvation, that Bb major and C major are closely related keys to the goal of Schumann's narrative. This seems especially true when we consider that it is by virtue of his constant striving that Faust is saved after his death, therefore the poetic concerns of Bb and C major of Part Two combine to prepare the transfiguration of Faust's soul to Heaven in Part Three, an event realised in F major, the subdominant and dominant of which are Bb and C major. By opening Part Two with Faust's reinvigoration at the sight of the rising sun set in Bb, and the closing of Part Two with Faust's death in C major, we may assert that Part Two as a whole prepares an overarching IV-V-I cadence, as a poetic tonal presentation of the vital narrative events of the scenes isolated by Schumann from Goethe's original text, onto the tonic of F major in Part Three. The foundation and preparation in Part Two of a tonic that does not actually appear in Scenes 4 to 6 in any established form alludes to the possibility of an unseen achievement of the tonic, it suggests that there is a greater tonal scheme outside of Part Two in which F major is attained, thus alluding to a greater context beyond that of the fragments of Part Two.

Having seen how the scenes of Part Two fulfil one aspect of the fragment by alluding to a broader context beyond themselves I will now attempt to portray how these scenes are simultaneously isolated structures independent from one another. For Parts One and Three and Scene 5 of Part Two, the self-sufficiency of the fragmented

scenes is manifested in their closed tonalities, concluding as they do in either the tonic or its major/minor inflection. Thus these tonal full circles frame each scene, enclosing them as independent elements within which subtle tonal references allude to the greater whole from which the scenes have been fragmented. Therefore the individual scenes of Parts One and Three and Scene 5 of Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* are perfect examples of the narrative fragment. However, with Scenes 4 and 6 of Part Two the scenes are not encased in a tonal frame while the closing mood of each is often a radical departure from its opening, two elements that betray the requirement of the totality of the oratorio to provide substance to these scenes. In other words, *Ariel Sunrise* and *Death of Faust* are seemingly dependant on the context of the oratorio for existence. How then, can we label these scenes of Part Two as fragments if they do not fulfil the requirements of the category? Close study instead reveals that Scenes 4 and 6 are not individual fragments, but two separate fragments welded together, each isolated and individual yet alluding to a broader whole.

Part One consists of three short scenes that may be self-contained because the breadth of their drama is relatively narrow. Part Three meanwhile is based on contemplative texts, reflections on the role and existence of Heaven, or simple celebratory subjects resulting in an equivalent lack of dramatic or narrative movement to Part One. The movement that there is, literary or tonal, is nonetheless subsumed within the scene as a whole. In other words, the relatively immobile narratives of Parts One and Three allow themselves to be cased in tonal and stylistic frames because there is no great movement in the scene away from the point at which the narrative began. Scene 5 of Part Two, meanwhile, although containing radical character development in the form of Faust's blinding and realisation of a grand and noble plan for his subjects, is framed dramatically by the excitement of the four Grey

Women as they approach Faust's Palace, and Faust's new-found fervour for life after his vision of a grand altruistic plan, a dramatic frame realised tonally by a B minor opening and a B major close that internalise the narrative progression of the scene and in doing so isolate its context from the greater whole. Through this, *Midnight* fulfils the requirement of the fragment by being both isolated and independent by virtue of its framing sections and yet alluding tonally to a broader context as discussed above. In contrast, Scenes 4 and 6 of Part Two involve great change and narrative progression that is externalised, spreading to the boundaries of its fragmented form. Scene 4 is split between the depiction of the blessing of the sleeping Faust by Ariel and the spirits of Nature, and the newly rejuvenated Faust's awakening and marvelling at the glory of nature. Scene 6, *Death of Faust*, meanwhile, contrasts the base mocking songs of the Lemurs and their master Mephistopheles with Faust's vision of a noble act for his subjects. Therefore in Scenes 4 and 6 of Schumann's oratorio the characters and narratives are greatly developed within each fragment, denying the possibility of affecting at the close of the scene a return to the original mood, style and tonality. Indeed to do so would be to impose an unnatural and unfaithful circularity on Goethe's original scenes, a recapitulation that finds no basis in the text – a concept foreign to Schumann. Instead, Schumann separates each scene into two independent sections, two side-by-side fragments, which pursue and complete their own independent narrative and tonal goals. The result is the welding together of two fragments, isolated from the overarching narrative but presented side by side. The whole has been shattered and presented in both Scenes 4 and 6 are two segments that continue to allude to the original totality but are independent of one another despite their proximity.

Scene 4, *Ariel Sunrise*, contains a narrative divided into two clear sections, a divide that marks the separation of the two adjoined fragments. The first fragment of Scene 4 finds Ariel and a group of spirits blessing and reviving Faust. Dominated by Bb major and its related keys, this fragment has almost no narrative growth within it, the only real diversion from the tonic being a sudden Eb minor as Ariel hears the clangour of the rising sun. But with the rising of the sun (“dazzling, deafening, dumbfounding”), Bb major is re-established and the first fragment of Scene 4 concluded. However, a nine bar G minor transitional period in which Ariel advises the spirits to hide from the rising sun (“into bells of blossom creep,/ lie there quiet, deep and deep,/ into rock and under leaf;/ if it strike you, you are deaf”) shifts onto its dominant, D major, which prepares the second fragment. The second fragment of Scene 4, marked by the awakening of Faust in G major, opens with an instrumental E minor, seemingly only to match the close of the fragment and the scene in E major. This E minor is the first sharp key since the D major of the *Judex* from *Scene in the Cathedral* in Part One of the oratorio, and it moves quickly to G major for Faust’s awakening and realisation of the magnificence of nature, portrayed in a variety of keys that finally resolve, after the glorious vision of the rising sun, on B major, the dominant major, which alternates twice with the tonic major, E, before the fragment and the scene closes Faust’s new lease of life in a strong E major. The division of Scene 4 into two distinct fragments is depicted in the change from flat to sharp keys and the substitution of the invocations of Ariel and the spirits for Faust’s awakening and appreciation of nature. Each fragment starts and closes in its own tonal space that is clearly defined from the other by a transitional period of G minor to D major, acting as a tonal pivot as the relative minor of the first fragment in Bb major and the dominant major of the second in E minor.

Scene 6, *Death of Faust*, is divided into the two adjacent fragments of Mephistopheles and the Lemurs digging Faust's grave and Faust's exposition of his altruistic vision, realised at the close of Scene 5, for the future of his land. The first is depicted and dominated by the key of D minor with a brief interlude for Mephistopheles in A minor before its conclusion by Faust in D major, the tonic major, with the words "the earth is now her own good neighbour/ and sets the waves a boundary – confinement strict and strenuous". Faust's noble sentiment, illustrated by the change to D major, is interrupted by Mephistopheles with his G minor aside "In all respects you're lost and stranded,/ the elements with us have banded - / annihilation is the law" that begins the transition from the first to the second fragment of Scene 6. The fifty-two bar transition moves from G minor, the subdominant major of the first fragment, through Ab major and back to G minor, preparing the arrival of C major, the tonic of the second fragment of *Death of Faust*. Once achieved C major will dominate the second fragment, albeit in a chromatically mitigated form, as Faust spells out his vision ("my deeds, if I could drain this sink,/ would culminate as well as terminate:/ to open to the millions living space,/ not danger-proof but free to run their race"). Having completed his speech and found contentment, Faust dies, and the mitigation of C major continues with Mephistopheles until the Chorus sing "It is fulfilled!" from where C major is strongly projected until its final, unambiguous, cadence, thus bringing the second fragment, and Scene 6 as a whole, to conclusion in C major. Thus in Scene 6, just as with Scene 5, Schumann wraps the two fragments in their own tonal frames, D minor to D major for the first and C major for the second, with a transitional period that links the two separate fragments.

Schumann therefore creates in Scenes 4 and 6 the appearance of two joined fragments. Each of the four fragments is complete in itself through tonal closure and



yet clearly alludes to a greater whole. That two fragments have been welded together in each scene through the use of a transitional period does not detract from the individual fragment's isolation from the overriding narrative because each is still separate unto itself with tonal and narrative closures. Therefore we see in Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* the same technique of narrative fragmentation as the composer employed in his song cycles, and specifically *Frauenliebe und -Leben*, but in a manner which allowed him to pair his fragments together, while simultaneously maintaining their autonomy from one another.

## The Fragmented Sublime

For something to be sublime it must be on a large scale: large in itself, in its power or in its extent or shape. Thus the ideal, the infinite is incontestably of the greatest sublimity; the concept which embraces the eternal, the ineffable, the divine, the supremely transcendental in all its relations with the finite world, dwarfing nature herself... The sublime object is usually at the same time both attractive and repellent; it does not arouse an unadulterated feeling of pleasure, but one of pleasure combined with a certain displeasure, a feeling that is none the less intensified by this very mixture. This is the most beautiful and at the same time the most surely and easily recognisable hallmark of the sublime. (Schilling<sup>12</sup> in *MaA*: 472-3)

The sublime for the Romantics was a transcendental experience stimulated by an encounter with a phenomenon of massive proportions, size or power, which terrified and overwhelmed the senses. A sublime phenomenon was typically located in nature, such as the mountain or the storm, but could also be a manmade artefact – the classic example being architecture. The underlying concept behind the sublime effect was not that the phenomenon was massive so much the sublimated individual is small and weak in comparison: the sublime throws into relief our frail mortality.

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<sup>12</sup> From Gustav Schilling (1803-81) and "The sublime" in *Universal lexikon der tonkunst* (1834-8) quoted in *MaA*.

However the very act of being overwhelmed by fear strikes within us the higher sense of reason, a semi-divine property in the view of the nineteenth-century, to encompass the massive proportions of the sublime phenomenon. For the philosophers of the sublime, such as Gustav Schilling, Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke, and Peter Lichtenthal, the importance of the sublime lies in the transcendental realisation of the powers of reason. Lichtenthal observes that

it is true that the sublime inhibits the imagination and the intellect to start with by its immeasurable size; but it extends and develops the activity of reason, sharpening and developing its vital senses. So the sublime is that which, by its immeasurable grandeur, stimulates the action of reason, increasing its vital senses...the sublime comprises the infinite which terrifies the senses and the imagination beyond the powers of comprehension, and it is reason that creates and affirms the sublime. (Lichtenthal in *MaA*: 372).

Because we cannot grasp the size of the sublime phenomenon or because we feel helpless before its power then we realise, in a moment of epiphany, that our rational laws demand that we comprehend the infinite and that we strive for free will. This is the key to the transcendental aspect of the sublime and the element that directly links this idea to the fragment: “separate from the rest of the universe, the Fragment nevertheless suggests distant perspectives. Its separation, indeed, is aggressive: it projects into the universe precisely by the way it cuts itself off” (Rosen 1995: 48). In exactly the same way as the sublime “stimulates the action of reason” by the inability of the senses to grasp the phenomenon, so too does the fragment stimulate the imagination of the potentially infinite by the limitations of the individual fragment’s boundaries. In the experience of the sublime, we become the fragment, projecting reason out to grasp the immense, we provide a perspective to view the infinite by virtue of our limited means. It is in this correlation that we find the crux of the sublime and the fragment – they are both a means of exploration of the limits of the Romantic human soul. Through the incomplete nature of the fragment the nineteenth-

century man may discover the infinite – the fundamental fragment being the location of the individual within society and the universe – and by opening themselves to the terrifying experience of the sublime phenomenon the Romantic individual may discover the heights of reason, the semi-divine property of secular humanity. To combine the two theories into the concept of the ‘fragmented sublime’ is therefore a relatively easy exercise, containing as they do such underlying similarities. Rather than have the sublime effect aroused by a phenomenon of massive proportions, instead it is the *suggestion* of massive proportions by the fragment that is sublime. In this sense the process of the fragmented sublime would be similar to the stumbling upon the remains of a shattered monolithic statue, with only a single gigantic foot protruding from the ground. From this foot alone we may infer the vast size of the original statue and be horrified by the implicated massive proportions, a fear that affects within us the experience of the sublime. In this manner the fragment and the sublime may be united.

Schumann’s *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* embodies the fragmented sublime. In the context of a multi-movement musical composition the fragmented sublime may be invoked in the same way as the fragment, through the suggestion of a greater context beyond that which is presented. To make the experience sublime the scale of this unseen context must be of such huge proportions as to affect on the audience the terror of the sublime, a terror rooted in the realisation of our own frail mortality. The scale of Goethe’s *Faust*, the themes it deals with, is of a magnitude and significance to humble any listener and as such is capable of sublimity. Schumann’s setting of a work that addressed many of the topics of vital concern to the nineteenth-century reduced this overarching narrative into seven isolated scenes and in the process created only seven fragments through which to allude to the entirety of Goethe’s vast

tragedy. One aspect of this can be observed in the startling contrast intrinsic to Schumann's fragmentation, for example the juxtaposition of Faust's death at the close of Part Two, presented at the time as a climax of some sorts, with a jump straight to the heavenly host preparing Faust's soul for its ascension to Heaven. Schumann's Scene 7 therefore immediately dwarfs the seemingly climactic events of Scene 6.

Lichtenthal relates this directly to the sublime when he states that

Pleasure in the sublime is distinguished from pleasure in the beautiful, in that whereas the beautiful relates to the *form* of things, that is to say to their *quality*, the sublime is a matter of their *size*, or *quantity* and may be found in objects that are devoid of form, such as enormous masses of rock. Since we tend to recognise the size of an object by comparing it with other objects, it follows that if at the moment of perception a thing seems to be great beyond all comparison, we elevate it quantitatively above anything else comparable and give to it the term *sublime* (Lichtenthal in *MaA*: 372).

As such, the seemingly important mortal drama of Faust and Gretchen of Parts One and Two of Schumann's oratorio are suddenly thrown into relief as a matter of little import in the context of the divine and eternal drama of a transcendent universe that subsumes the petty life of any single man. Even the transcendent events witnessed in Goethe's conclusion are merely the celebration of a single soul ascending to heaven, one single sublime moment in an eternity of sublimity. The fragmented sublime is therefore realised because at the start of Part Three the drama suggests, as is made explicit by Schumann's fragmentation of the play, that the troubles of Faust and Gretchen's lives are insignificant in the grand scheme of the universe. The audience, therefore, will be forced to the same conclusion about their own lives, especially because Faust's existence was particularly significant and spectacular in the mortal realm. The sudden comparison of an individual's life with the endless ebb and flow of the cosmos will render the individual insignificant in comparison, an insignificance that will inspire awe and terror at the scope of the phenomenon, at its overwhelmingly

unimaginable size. This is therefore a combined pleasure and displeasure: the hallmark of the sublime. Because Goethe and Schumann achieve this effect through the presentation of a single fragment of humanity – Faust, and especially through Schumann’s fragmentation of this one life to juxtapose Faust’s existence with a brief glimpse of the infinite, then the fragmented sublime is realised.

As the realisation of the fragmented sublime, *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* embodies the extension and culmination of the formal technique of the narrative fragment used in Schumann’s song cycle *Frauenliebe und –Leben*, a formal technique that itself was founded in Schumann’s extra-musical literary interests. By shattering Goethe’s *Faust* with the narrative fragment and setting the remnants as the embodiment of the narrative fragment that, through the scope of Goethe’s imposing masterwork, ascended to the level of the fragmented sublime, Schumann’s oratorio *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* fulfils several aspects of the Grand Opus genre simultaneously as both the culmination of the composer’s earlier work and the incorporation of Schumann’s literary passion.



## Chapter Three: Historicism and the Second Symphony

The Romantics were the first historically aware generation, the epoch that could draw upon any source from history for their own means. Schumann's historicism of the 1840s, embodied in a critical dissatisfaction with the work of his contemporaries and his elevation of Bach, Beethoven and Schubert as exemplars of spirit and truth, resulted in a "New Way" of composing based upon counterpoint studies combined with his well known avant-garde style, a dichotomy of past and future that lay at the heart of Romantic historicism. In this chapter I will firstly explore the main concepts of Romantic historicism and how it may be applied to music. Secondly I shall review Schumann's own historical consciousness, specifically his "New Way" of composing, then I will examine the relationship of the Romantics with Bach and the chorale before exploring how Schumann manifested his historicism in his Second Symphony through the use of the Bachian chorale to reinstate true poetic 'spirit' back into his symphony. Finally, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, and specifically Part Three, will be explored as a further and greater incarnation of Schumann's Romantic compositional historicism, again observing the oratorio as a culmination and development of the composer's earlier career.

### **Romantic Historicism**

The genuinely new grows only from the old,  
Our future must be founded on the past!  
I shall not support the stifling present,  
I shall bind myself to you, eternal artists.  
*A.W. Schlegel*

This statement of intent from A.W. Schlegel reveals the awareness of the philosophical group known as the Romantic circle, comprising of Tieck, Wackenroder,

Novalis and the Schlegel brothers, of the new-born subject of historicism. What A.W. Schlegel's declaration also depicts is that he was a subjective historian, viewing the past as an idealised time in comparison to his own. As will be observed, Schumann employed subjective compositional historicism in his Second Symphony through the use of the Bachian chorale to invoke what Schumann saw as the artistic purity of the past. The opposite pole to the subjective historicism of Schlegel and Schumann is objective historicism, which aims impartially and faithfully to recreate the past<sup>13</sup>. The growth of historical consciousness at the start of the nineteenth-century was strongly subjective which meant that the Romantic generation was the first that could, and would, attempt to restore elements of the past in the present, an expression of dissatisfaction with their own time and a longing for an idealised 'Golden Age' of previous epochs. Schumann shared elements of this stance with his belief that the spirit of the symphony had changed, degenerated even, from a supposedly more refined age. This frustration with the perceived inadequacy of contemporary life, perfectly expressed by A.W. Schlegel's declaration above, when articulated through a recreation or imitation of past art contains an obvious contradiction with another, equally important, tenet of Romantic philosophy: the significance of originality. Garratt tell us that "the centrality of the concept of originality to post-Enlightenment aesthetics is indisputable. This concept – uniting the categories of individuality, novelty and spontaneity – stands diametrically opposed to imitation and copying" (Garratt 2002: 9). The solution to this contradiction was the belief that an artist may employ historical sources for his own means, but only in the name of his own

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<sup>13</sup> Nietzsche dismissed objective historicism as self-defeating and pointless but dictated that there were three forms of subjective historicism: monumental, antiquarian and critical. Monumental historicism distorted former events by isolating and elevating individual events as significant to the detriment of the remainder, antiquarian embraced all historical events as equally significant, and critical history provided "a means of 'judging and annihilating a past' in order to create a new present" (Garratt 2000: 167).

contemporary spirit. To try and resurrect a past spiritual content in a modern context would create a fatal disunity or render the works' substance unintelligible to contemporary minds. This issue relates closely to the dialectic of the Romantic artist's 'spirit' and 'craft'. For Schumann and the Romantics, 'spirit', or 'genius', was the mark of a true artist: "what made art art, the quality that distinguished art from lowly craft and everyday 'prose', was named 'poetry' by Schumann, following the precedent of Jean Paul Richter's esthetics" (Dahlhaus 1982: 3). Meanwhile 'craft', or 'talent', was the process of an artist, the technique and the method. Those who possessed only 'craft' could create pleasing works but not poetry, whereas uncontrolled 'spirit' alone was little better than embryonic expression. An artist with 'spirit' had the inspiration to create great art but he must employ 'craft' to present it as poetry, much like an architect must combine his aesthetic regard with structural concerns – the supporting walls and ballasts are the necessary structure on which the architect may present his design. By transferring the idea of 'spirit' and 'craft' to historicism, we may observe that to rejuvenate a dead artistic style in its original spirit would be merely a technical exercise, a pointless restatement of what has already been said in completion. But to use a past language to articulate a contemporary content is to marry 'craft' and 'spirit' and in the process create poetry. Hegel, a driving force in the origins of historicism, was adamant that "while the modern artist is no longer tied to a single, contemporary language, and can range freely over materials from any sources, the mode of treatment of such materials must be sincere, coming from the 'inner life of his heart', or else art descends into mannerism and caprice" (Garratt 1999: 30-1). Schumann mirrored this exact opinion with his critical statement that "the sonata style of 1790 is not that of 1840; the demands as to form and content have risen everywhere" (Schumann in Brown 1975: 73). When the free rein over all



sources available to the historically aware nineteenth-century artist was exercised with a modern and individual authenticity, then the catalysing dialectic of historicism and originality would be solved, and talent and genius combined.

To apply historicism to Schumann's Second Symphony and *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* I will draw upon the work of James Garratt who formulated the concept of 'compositional historicism' in his review of Mendelssohn's 'Reformation' Symphony to analyse the use of antiquated musical styles by nineteenth-century composers. The main focus of Garratt's compositional historicism is the transference of language translation theory to music as a means of interpreting a composer's use of past materials. His convincing argument posits the central idea of both linguistic translation and the act of compositional historicism as the idea of recovery:

recovery of meanings or truths from a text or body of texts and the subsequent re-expression of this essential content in a new text...Not only the nineteenth-century performances of Bach and Palestrina but also the works that in some way use their languages are translations: attempts to recover and adapt the meanings, the spiritual attempts to reclaim, through their language, a content inexpressible through purely modern means (Garratt 1999: 34).

Leading on from this is the definition of two voices in any translation, linguistic or musical, of the original author and the translator's. The translation can either combine the two voices of source and translator, fluctuating between these two, or present both voices simultaneously, although still distinct. These two voices are then communicated through three differing forms of translation: literal "word-for-word" translation, paraphrase – the communication of the original author's intent through altered means, and re-creation – where the translator takes great liberty over even the content of the original. However, Garratt observes that for music these three distinctions are far too delineated and musical translation should be regarded as a subtle and sequential scale between these three signposts. Schumann reflected on a

closely related issue when considering the craft of arranging another composer's work:

It boils down to the old question of whether the interpretive artist may place himself above the creative artist; whether the former may change the latter's work arbitrarily. The answer is easy: we laugh at a foolish person, if he does it badly; we allow an intelligent person [*einen Geistreichen*] to do it, provided he does not altogether destroy something of the meaning of the original (Schumann in Brown 1975: p86).

This statement contains strong overtones of re-creational translation, albeit for compositional arrangements, where even the original content is open to interpretation and alteration. More so, the root of this belief is again founded upon the idea of the "intelligent person" who possesses spirit, the genius able to maintain "something of the meaning of the original" while altering the external form.

An important factor to note in Garratt's method of translation is the idea that

any interpretation of the significance of the fragments of earlier music in the 'Reformation' Symphony (or of similarly localised references in comparable works) seems to be dependent on their 'otherness'; as allusions, a dialectic exists between these fragments, with their semantic and associative connotations, and the new context in which they have been placed. They are seemingly defined and controlled by the new material with which they are juxtaposed and combined (Garratt 1999: 27).

Garratt's assessment of "semantic and associative connotations" and the modifying context of these associations bear obvious correspondences with our previous discussion of genre in the *Fantasie* and *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*. However there is an important distinction to make between the combination of contemporary genres in a single work and the importing of historically remote material, styles or forms into a modern piece. Kallberg's "generic contract" was based upon an unspoken agreement between composer and audience as to what a contemporary genre represented, its connotations and semantics. But with compositional historicism, the imported genre is not contemporary to the composer or audience. Therefore the "generic contract" of compositional historicism is dictated by the subjective views of the past held by

composer and audience. In other words, we should not consider what the imported genre or style represented in its own time (it's *objective* historical meaning), but what the genre or style represents to the composer who imported it (it's *subjective* meaning). We shall see for Schumann that his employment of the chorale in his Second Symphony represented for him a spiritual purity and strength, the trope of the genius as descended from its use by Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert.

### Schumann and his "New Way"

Relationships of music to the past are relevant not only historically but esthetically. Such a relationship became a conscious linking in the nineteenth-century, in the symphony as well as in opera and song. It is an aspect of the works themselves; it is part of their import to be connected with earlier works, either to confirm them or to deviate from them... One of the typical traits of the nineteenth-century is the parallel growth of an urge to ever new horizons and a consciousness of dependence on history. These extremes, indeed, did not merely exert their effects separately; they were also interlocked, especially in the work of the most important composers (Dahlhaus 1982: 97)

The true beginning of Schumann's historicism in the 1840s reflects the relatively late adoption of historicism by the musical world in comparison to the other arts. Despite this, by 1834 Schumann had shown some interest in the topic as revealed by his absorption of the, admittedly biased and factually limited, historiographies of Schubart and Thibaut. Indeed it was through amateur performances in Thibaut's home that Schumann gained an appreciation of Handel's oratorios, while he pursued a personal interest in Bach through a copy of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* in 1832 and by publishing a re-circulation of Bach works in *NZfM* from 1839-41 that included four chorale preludes, two fugues, and an organ fantasia. But even though Schumann's grasp of historical events and facts was limited, in the 1830s he expressed a strong grasp of the philosophies of historicism. Schumann's dissatisfaction with the present

in relation to an idealised past was clearly articulated in his belief that “after Beethoven’s death an unmistakable superficiality in musical production occurred. Beethoven’s influence was recognizable only in a few higher striving musicians, while most of them had lost themselves in an empty floweriness” (Brown 1975: 53). Meanwhile, his editorial in *NZfM* of January 1835 described the aims of the journal:

to acknowledge the past and its creations, and to draw attention to the fact that new artistic beauties can only be strengthened by such a pure source; next, to oppose the recent past as an inartistic period, which has only a notable increase in mechanical dexterity to show for itself; and finally, to prepare for and facilitate the advent of a fresh, poetic future (Schumann in Daverio 1997: 119).

Schumann’s personal discursive tool, the *Davidsbündler*, also provided a platform for Schumann’s burgeoning historicism as, in 1834 and speaking through Raro (a mediator between the extremes of his dual personalities Florestan and Eusebius), Schumann said

I am no devoté of antiquarianism; in fact I tend to think of this antediluvian research as so much historical dilettantism. In my opinion it has little influence on our artistic culture. You also know, however, how emphatically I have encouraged you to study the ancients...not that you might muster erudite astonishment at every minute detail, but that you might learn to trace the expanded artistic means of today back to their sources, and to discover how they can be intelligently employed (Schumann in Platinga 1967: 85).

The latter statement specifically and unapologetically describes subjective monumental historicism in that it exaggerates the influence of specific events and people at expense of what remains. Such a distortion is based upon the Romantic conception of the genius in art, the poet among the technicians, because in Schumann’s view history is a search for these poets as a means of education for the present. The genius, as we saw above, was for the Romantics and specifically Schumann, an artist who wields ‘spirit’ (meaning artistic creation and inspiration) and forges it through ‘craft’ (meaning the technical methods of composition) into poetry.

Schumann's editorial of January 1835 (seen above) directly opposes and elevates the 'pure source' of the past masters with the 'mechanical dexterity', the empty virtuosity, of his contemporaries. Thus we see Schumann's historicism is directly linked to a belief in the superiority and timelessness of 'genius' over 'talent', and that the main objective of historicism is to regain the spirit of the likes of Bach and Beethoven, for it is their spirit that makes them worthy of historical study. Schumann's speech at the seventh annual meeting of the *Dauidsbüundler* in 1841 expresses this very issue, and with direct references to the divine aspect of 'spirit' of the past in opposition to the profane 'craft' of the present:

Wherever I cast my eyes I see golden calves on splendid pedestals, and a dancing and billowing crowd around the animal. In so many sacred places I see holy books full of lofty runes, sunken under debris, covered with dust and forgotten, and above them the piled up ballast of feeble, limpid products of poor craftsmanship. Here every member of the organisation should not destroy his code of laws, but rather let them be illuminated with a flaming script, so that the eyes of the people are opened, that they may see the calf as calf, so that the old prophets (for singers and seers have all along been designated by the same word) would be brought back to life. But my last final sentence is not a summons to arms against the new; I will not one-sidedly overemphasise the old and place it above everything of the future. To recognise all worthy endeavours shall be our motto, to appreciate every merit should be our striving, since something noble and beautiful can mature in every latitude and at every time (Schumann in Brown 1975: 60).

The supremacy of the explicitly religious 'spirit' over the profanity and false idolatry of golden calves is the dominant force in Schumann's historicism and his own re-illumination of 'the old prophets' and their 'holy books' will inform our exploration of his Second Symphony.

As all Romantics, however, Schumann had to balance this newfound historical consciousness with his belief in the importance of originality, a key tenet of Schumann's critical beliefs expressed in the striving for a new, poetic, future. This dichotomy, as we have observed, was resolved through Hegel's spiritual authenticity.

For Schumann, “there is no basic contradiction between dependence on models and artistic freedom. But never are historical models to be imitated literally; they serve instead as a fund of ideas and techniques usable for the enrichment of contemporary style – but it must always remain contemporary style” (Platinga 1967: 100). This is represented most strongly in Schumann’s defence of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* against accusations of formlessness. Schumann vindicated the work through a demonstration of the symphony’s affinities to the traditional symphonic form, a defence, therefore, based upon Berlioz’s mechanical ‘craft’ that Schumann was loathe to make for, in his own words, “surely Berlioz [a former medical student] never dissected the head of some handsome murderer with greater distress than that which I felt as I dissected his first movement” (Schumann in *MaNe*: 174). Berlioz’s groundbreaking symphony was radical and expressive, but Schumann recognised too its dependence on history as a platform of tradition upon which it reached forward into the avant-garde.

By the mid-1840s Schumann had become concerned that he himself lacked a platform of tradition upon which to construct his own achievements, that his instinctive and compact manner of composing lacked the technique to be sustained over large-scale movements. Notably, to correct this perceived deficiency Schumann chose the historical model of Bach as the exemplar of traditional technique, rather than the craft of his contemporaries. The disparity Schumann felt between himself and many of his contemporaries can be observed in his opinion of Heinrich Dorn, his counterpoint tutor of the early 1830s, of whom he wrote “I can never come to an agreement with Dorn...by a fugue he wants me to understand music. Heavens! How different people are!” (Schumann in Brown 1975: 142). Thus we see that Schumann identified technique and craft as integral to composition, having been practised in

perfection by Bach and Beethoven, but that method was no more than the successful presentation of spirit. He could not, for example, understand music from a fugue, for fugues are predominantly mathematical, not expressive – they may teach one the rules of musical composition while revealing nothing of its heart. To strive toward a poetic future Schumann wished to discard of the predominance of craft in his contemporaries and return to a technique that presented and enhanced spirit, not supplanted it. This craft he identified in the works of Bach, Beethoven and Schubert, and specifically in their use of the chorale – a craft Schumann would emulate in his Second Symphony.

Schumann himself named the change of compositional direction of 1845, a change strongly influenced by Bachian counterpoint studies, his “New Way”, of which he said “I used to compose almost all of my shorter pieces in the heat of inspiration...only from the year 1845 onwards, when I started to work out everything in my head, did a completely new manner of composing begin to develop” (Schumann in Daverio 2001: 779). Daverio’s response to this statement is to assert of the Second Symphony that

it is open to debate whether this composition represents a watershed in the sense that, say, Beethoven’s *Eroica* does. While the Second Symphony demonstrates a notable sophistication in its integration of materials over the entire course of a multi-movement work, Schumann’s “new manner” of 1845 is perhaps better understood as a logical outgrowth of his approach to large-scale composition in the earlier 1840s rather than as a radical break (Daverio 1997: 13).

However, rather than locating Schumann’s “New Way” in technical facets it may be more prudent to take the composer at his word, that his “New Way” simply involved more ‘working out’ as opposed to ‘inspiration’, namely more craft and less spirit. Schumann had said during his early career “the first conception is always the most natural and the best. Reason errs, but never feeling”, but after a decade as a music critic he became “more and more impressed with the importance of the rational

processes of the craft – of systematic development of themes, of revision and refining. In the 1840s Schumann began to find *Ausführung* (“working out”) fully as necessary as *Erfindung* (“invention”)” (Platinga 1967: 131). Daverio is right in that the “New Way” was not a radical departure from Schumann’s earlier work but more of a change of emphasis, a rebalancing of ‘spirit’ and ‘craft’, a rebalancing that was based upon the study of Bach’s counterpoint. More complex compositional methods such as multi-movement unity and the use of archaic counterpoint are the symptoms of Schumann’s “New Way”, the signs that he has changed direction, rather than the change itself. If one were to stipulate a lineage of thought progression in Schumann’s adoption of archaic counterpoint studies then it would start with the composer’s aversion to the “empty floweriness” of music after Beethoven. This would lead to a belief in a relative ‘Golden Age’ prior to this contemporary emptiness based upon his view of the duality of craft and spirit, the dominant relationship of which was reversed at the death of Beethoven. Schumann, as critic and composer, would desire the re-establishment of spirit as the dominant force in music and to achieve this he advocates the education of the present through the studying of the ‘Golden Age’. But to purify the spirit of his own time, Schumann cannot invoke the spirit of a bygone era in the 1840s, for the past has already occurred and cannot be recapitulated. And so, ironically, to rid his generation of the facile dominance of technique he must employ craft himself, but a craft that operates as a scaffold upon which a composer may form his individual and modern spirit and thus create poetry. Therefore, Schumann studied Bachian counterpoint in the establishment of his “New Way” that entailed a greater focus upon the craft of music, but as a means of extending and enhancing the presentation of his modern artistic ‘spirit’. In the C major Symphony this was manifested in the invocation of the illustrious line of Bach, Beethoven and Schubert



through the use of the chorale. By demoting technique and reinstating spirit and poetry as the goal of art, Schumann purified his music and struck out toward a fresh, poetic future.

## Bach and the Romantics

Berlioz, on visiting Germany and witnessing a performance of Bach's *St Mathew's Passion* in 1841-2, wrote of the occasion in a letter to his friend that aptly illustrates the relationship of nineteenth-century Germany with Bach:

When one comes from Paris and knows our musical customs, one must witness the respect, the attention, the piety with which a German audience listens to such a composition, to believe it. Every one follows the words of the text with his eyes; not a movement in the house, not a murmur of approbation or blame, not the least of applause; they are listening to a sermon, hearing the Gospel sung; they are attending in silence, not a concert but a divine service. And it is really thus that this music ought to be listened to. They adore Bach, and believe in him, without supposing for an instant that his divinity can ever be questioned; a heretic would horrify them; it is even forbidden to speak on the subject. Bach is Bach, as God is God (Berlioz in Kolodin 1969: 112).

For German Romantics Bach, quite simply, represented the source of spiritual authenticity. Whether musical or religious spirit it was Bach who symbolized a purer, more authentic time when compared to the apparently corrupted and ungracious present of the nineteenth-century. Schumann's personal elevation of Bach is seen in his belief that Bach was "the first to endow his music with the intangible spiritual and poetic qualities Schumann associated with the best composers of his own day" (Platinga 1967: 87). For Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn meanwhile, Bach was the embodiment of traditional Protestant sacred music and thus the true heart of their faith, as embodied in his passions and cantatas that were not only a "priceless aesthetic legacy echoing a past world of metaphorical security and rational order, but contained as a kind of prophetic essence the foundations of a new national ethical

consciousness” (Toews 1993: 736). Indeed, Fanny Mendelssohn’s sense of musical historicism comes to the fore when, during a visit to Rome, she compared “the Italian Passion music to crumbling Byzantine mosaics that had lost their ability to speak to the emotional and ethical needs of the present. For her the Protestant tradition was intrinsically connected to the universal, edifying ethos she found in the Bach tradition” (Toews 1993: 729). For both Schumann and the Mendelssohns, Bach was not simply a past master to be revered, but a source of true artistry and faith that could be emulated in the present to strive toward spiritually purer goals. For the Mendelssohn’s this purity was both artistic and religious, a duality at odds with the secular nature of the Romantic period, while Schumann was more contemporary in his appreciation of Bach’s ‘spirit’ as a humanistic quality. To strive toward their individual religious and artistic goals both the Mendelssohn siblings and Schumann would draw upon the chorale to emulate Bach. For Felix Mendelssohn this was manifested mostly clearly in his retrieval of the *St Mathew Passion* (1829) and his own two oratorios *St Paul* (1836) and *Elijah* (1846). Schumann’s own employment of Bachian technique was, of course, manifested in his “New Way” of 1845 and, as shall be observed, specifically his Second Symphony.

Bach’s chorales were specific objects of spiritual and compositional historicism in nineteenth-century Germany, as expressed adroitly in the assertion that in the oratorio genre “tradition for Germany is the use of the chorale and the emphasis on the chorus” (Smither 2001: 520). To understand the significance of the chorale in the Romantic period, and especially its meaning for Schumann, we must trace a brief history of the genre. The chorale genre was founded in the heat of Martin Luther’s early-sixteenth century Reformation – the emancipation of the common, everyday individual and his faith from the ancient strictures of worship. Luther, to some

disputed extent, took a hand himself in the composition of the Lutheran chorales that would provide a musical translation of this demystified and liberated Christianity. It was at this point that the tone of the Bachian chorale was set as the Lutherans combined in their compositions not only the “plain-song office hymn and sequence of the medieval church” but also “the popular melodies which, in the later Middle Ages, were to be heard from the Minnesinger and Meistersinger, and which overflowed into the popular music of certain heretical or schismatic sects in Europe” (Routley 1957: 8). The influence of popular music on the Lutheran chorale was strengthened further with the advent of Pietism – the concentration on practical and private devotion – in which song traits were incorporated into the chorale idiom, mainly to allow everyday worship within one’s own home through easily memorised and performed devotional music. This development set the stage for the arrangement of Luther’s original chorale tunes by Bach with further secular influences as he removed the original “rhythmic irregularities and modal archaism, compensating this by counterpoint and by rich use of tonalities” (Routley 1957: 84). Bach’s secularised chorale arrangements constitute the form of the chorale genre that is defined by Marshall and Leaver as “the congregation hymn of the German Protestant service. Typically, it possesses certain formal and stylistic traits appropriate to its lay purpose: simple language, rhymed metrical verse, a strophic musical and textural form and an easily singable melody” (Marshall; Leaver 2001: 736). Thus we may observe in the chorale the admixture of religious devotion and a strong secular and popular influence. Indeed the sully of the sacrosanct chorale with popular music was necessary for it to be successful in its intended purpose: a vocal genre for the mass performance of a layman congregation as a communal expression of devotion. This purpose was the key aspect of the early eighteenth century chorale genre that attracted the Romantics: a collective articulation of faith

shared by the common man, a spirituality divorced from the control of the priesthood and placed in the hands of the everyday public. Thus Romantic composers, such as Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann could invoke not only a past time of religious purity through the chorale but also arouse an expression of communal devotion independent of both the geographical and liturgical confines of the church. Alexander Shapiro summarises these ideas with the statement that “the chorale came to symbolize a revered religious and musical heritage that had been all but lost in the spiritual decline (as it was perceived) of the modern age. J.S. Bach, who wrote but a few new chorale melodies, was viewed as a vestige of a hallowed past” (Shapiro 1993: 123). We shall now observe how Beethoven, Schubert and finally Schumann invoked this “hallowed past” in their symphonic finales through the use of the Bachian chorale.

### **Schumann, Schubert, Beethoven and the finale chorale theme**

Schumann’s belief in the ‘spirit’ and genius of significant composers leads him to a subjective and monumental historicism. This is most clearly observed in Platinga’s summation of Schumann’s view of history: “for Schumann, Bach was the first of a series of great composers whose personal contributions comprised the locus of an inevitable line of progress leading to his own time. This line extended from Bach through Beethoven and Schubert to the romantics of Schumann’s day” (Platinga 1967: 85). By calling upon the techniques of Schubert and Beethoven, by emulating their own achievements, Schumann wished to reinstate their focus upon the

presentation of spirit in their music through the compositional historicism of the Bachian chorale<sup>14</sup> and its connotations, for Schumann, of spiritual purity.

In the following analysis Beethoven's Ninth, Schubert's Ninth and Schumann's Second Symphonies shall be explored in the context of the chorale finale, the culmination of the work with a grand theme closely allied to the chorale genre. The purpose for these analyses is to compare the compositional historicism of Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann in their common use of the Bachian chorale and examine what this communicates about each composer's individual approach to historicism. This comparison will lead us to the conclusion that by invoking the distant spiritual figure of Bach and the less remote icons of Beethoven and Schubert in his Second Symphony, Schumann was calling upon the external forms of the past to refocus his own contemporary symphony upon the compositional aspect of 'spirit', rather than the empty 'craft' that he deplored in his contemporaries, and as such was an embodiment of historicism.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony concludes with a final movement that has been subjected to endless discussion about its every facet, most notably its elusive form and meaning. Our discussion, however, will focus upon the limited ground of Beethoven's preparation and presentation of the 'Ode to Joy' chorale theme (Ex.30).

Ex.30 Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, b.543-59



<sup>14</sup> I use the term 'chorale' loosely. See Garratt (2004) for a full account of this complex concept.

The most obvious characteristic of Beethoven's use of the chorale theme in the finale of his Ninth Symphony is that the 'Joy' theme, while arguably the climactic moment of the symphony, occurs at b.543, only slightly over half way through the last movement. Previous to b.543 the movement seems to have been preparing this climactic moment, but after the fulfilment of this preparation the chorale theme takes a secondary role before a further, conclusive climax with a distantly related theme at b.851. In the words of Maynard Solomon: "The Ninth Symphony's thematic quest does not end with the finding of the Ode to Joy. Thereafter the melody becomes the point of departure for an immense number of transformations, implying that even this theme is not an ultimate place of simple tranquillity" (Solomon in *NcM X*: 14). The continuation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony finale after the climactic achievement of the long-sought after 'Ode to Joy' chorale theme implies that there is more beyond this climax to discover, further for Beethoven to delve into and explore.

The recollection of the previous movements of Beethoven's Ninth at the start of the finale has often been described as a discarding of past ideas. However, the process seems somewhat more like a transcendence beyond these themes, the discovery of a common denominator and fundamental root of the thematic material of the symphony. This discovery is located in the introspective contemplations of the unaccompanied cellos and basses upon the themes of the previous three movements and discovery of the 'Joy' chorale theme within them. These allusions to the chorale theme are originally brief and ambiguous but grow in confidence until a conversion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement's thematic material into an unmistakable four bar quotation of the 'Joy' melody at b.77, followed presently by the complete form of the theme in the cellos and contrabasses alone at b.92. The instrumental variations upon the chorale theme that follow this solo presentation of the theme reach an energetic highpoint at

b.164, building towards a triumphant climax that is not achieved. Instead Beethoven breaks the texture down and starts the process again, recapitulating the opening bars of the movement then delving immediately back into an exploration of the 'Joy' theme but in the vocal, rather than instrumental, arena. The first full choral presentation of the chorale theme at b.241 is followed by an increasingly grand and vigorous set of variations upon the same theme that again, rather than reach the anticipated climax, segue into a Bb major tangential section at b.331. Beethoven pursues this tangent, straying into malevolent and aggressive minor tonalities before this too collapses, but into three short phrases that, in three steps, re-modulate the key back into D major. Finally, at b.543, the chorale 'Joy' theme comes to fruition as a tutti, *fortissimo*, D major declaration of a long anticipated climax, all the more effective for its oft-delayed arrival. Thus we see Beethoven's frustration of expectation rendering the arrival of the chorale finale theme all the more satisfying. However, after this grandly climactic and seemingly conclusive triumphant statement of the main theme of the symphony's finale in the symbolic tonality of the tonic major, Beethoven once again embarks upon a further tangent, this time in a 3/2 G major at b.595. The 'Joy' theme reappears at several moments, notably in a 6/4 D major incarnation at b.654 (Ex.31), after which it is employed as something of a chaconne, but never as a dominant or climactic theme until b.723.

Ex.31 Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, oboe b.654-62



Instead the movement and the symphony concludes, after a gradual climax starting at the *Prestissimo* at b.851 and culminating in b.919 to b.920, with a grandiose and unambiguous affirmation of the D major tonic with a tutti *fortissimo* on the words “Joy, O Joy, the God descended, God descended!” (Ex.32). The thematic material at this point is based upon a barely recognisable condensed variation of the chorale theme and is followed by a purely instrumental coda, also originally founded upon the ‘Joy’ chorale theme but within two bars is developed into the grand rhetoric of the symphonic finale.

Ex.32 Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, choir b.918-20

The musical score for the choir in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, measures 918-920, is presented for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are "Freu - de, schö - ner Göt - ter - fun - ken, Göt - ter - fun - ken!". The dynamics are marked as *f* (forte), *sf* (sforzando), and *ff* (fortissimo). The music features a condensed variation of the 'Joy' chorale theme.

These brief but distinct allusions to the chorale ‘Joy’ theme allay the feeling that, despite the unmistakable conclusive tone to this final passage, the true climax of the movement and the symphony was the beautifully prepared triumphant and glorious achievement of the chorale theme at b.543, almost four hundred bars previously. The material that succeeds the chorale climax never eclipses the ‘Joy’ theme as the dominant thematic material of the movement and the symphony, leaving one with the impression that the populist achievement of the ‘Joy’ theme, while hugely satisfying



musically, was not enough for Beethoven's philosophical exploration in the Ninth. His continued search after the success of the chorale finale, the extension of the last movement for another four hundred bars, appears as a search for something beyond the communal act of devotion appropriated through his use of the Bachian chorale. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Beethoven still recalls the populist 'Joy' theme immediately before the instrumental coda. The composer may have been exploring the limits of human emotion but he did not abandon his sense of mass audience appeal.

In a bald comparison of the crowd pleasing credentials of the finale of Beethoven's Ninth with the finale of Schubert's Ninth Symphony then Schubert's work comes a clear second. Both composers carefully and distinctly prepare a conclusive and climactic chorale theme finale, but where as Beethoven achieves this goal and then moves beyond it, Schubert never satisfies the yearning that he himself has created.

Organised into a slightly ambiguous sonata form structure, the last movement of Schubert's Ninth Symphony is a massive one thousand one hundred and fifty-three bars long. Divided into exposition of three hundred and forty-eight bars, a development section of two hundred and twenty-seven, a recapitulation of three hundred and fifty-nine bars, and a coda of one hundred and eighty-two bars the movement seemingly fits the sonata form pattern. However, the 1<sup>st</sup> subject of the exposition is considerably shorter than the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject at one hundred and sixty-four bars and two hundred and twenty bars respectively, with the repetition and amplification of this disproportion in the recapitulation at one hundred and thirty-nine to two hundred and twenty bars respectively. The disproportion of the exposition

argues against the categorisation Schubert's finale as a plain sonata form. Instead, the form of the movement is heavily weighted toward the conclusion of its two parallel sections, the exposition and recapitulation, so that the arrival of the chorale theme at the close of the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject in each signals the climax at both local and large-scale levels. This idea is reinforced by Schubert's recollection of the recapitulation in C minor, the tonic minor, thereby diminishing the impact of this moment as the traditionally climactic point of sonata form. The rendering of the recapitulation in the un-triumphant tonic minor throws further weight onto the inference of the close of the recapitulation as the goal of the movement and symphony.

The thematic material of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject of the Schubert's Ninth Symphony finale is bland and uncharacteristic. The dotted crotchet fanfare on the interval of a third in the wind section (Ex.33) and the arpeggiated triplets of the strings (Ex.34) portray the language of symphonic rhetoric.

Ex.33 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, b.1



Ex. 34 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, b.3



The inventive interplay of these basic themes hides none of their insipid origins as Schubert spins out scale upon scale in the violins with relentlessly foursquare phrases. However the purpose of this dull, and yet mercifully short, passage is revealed with the arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject at b.165 that, in contrast to what preceded it, is positively bursting with individuality and life. The assertion of an eminently melodic 'shape'

over the nondescript fanfare motif, whirring triplet scales, and hollow arpeggiated chords of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject provide a welcome burst of thematic quality, even the four sounded note of the first phrase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject providing originality by virtue of its simple, unaffected charm while simultaneously providing a platform for the step-wise movement of the following phrase (Ex.35).

Ex.35 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, oboes b.169-76



Also, the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject contains, almost as an afterthought, the seed of the chorale theme that Schubert prepares, but does not fulfil, as the climax of the movement. Occurring for the first time at b.193 in the oboes, clarinets and bassoons, this brief glimpse of the graceful simplicity of the chorale theme is a sign of greater things to come (Ex.36).

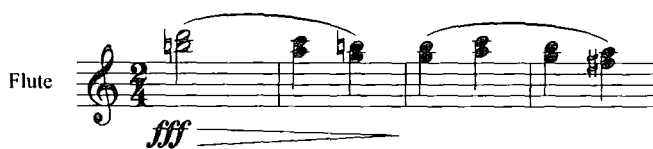
Ex.36 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, oboes b.193-6



However, despite the welcome character of the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject and chorale theme the repetitive foursquare rhythm and triplet arpeggios of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject have persisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> as accompanying figures, a sign that perhaps the symphonic rhetoric of the opening bars is not so easily dismissed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> subject, with its occasional flashes of the superior chorale theme, develops and expands upon its simple thematic idea despite the continuing inflections of the triplets and dotted crotchets of the insipid 1<sup>st</sup> subject until b.333 signals the hope of the symphony as the chorale theme is asserted

at a yet unheralded level. In a *fff* tutti moment, prepared by a long crescendo, the chorale theme is projected by both the woodwind section and the tenor trombones in G major, the dominant (Ex.37). However, this brief moment of ascendancy does not last because as soon as the theme is presented it recedes into the background. The *fff* of the orchestra is immediately undercut by a diminuendo over the first two bars of the four bar chorale theme phrase while the theme itself is passed, as a variation, around the orchestra as a constantly descending, receding even, glimpse of true beauty (Ex.38).

Ex.37 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, flutes b.333-37



Ex.38 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, cellos and contrabasses b.337-52



Meanwhile the symphonic rhetoric of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject, transcended for a mere twenty bars, creeps back into the texture through the fanfares of the woodwind at b.353. The brief and promising climax of b.333 marks the close of the exposition as the fading chorale allusions lead into the development section.

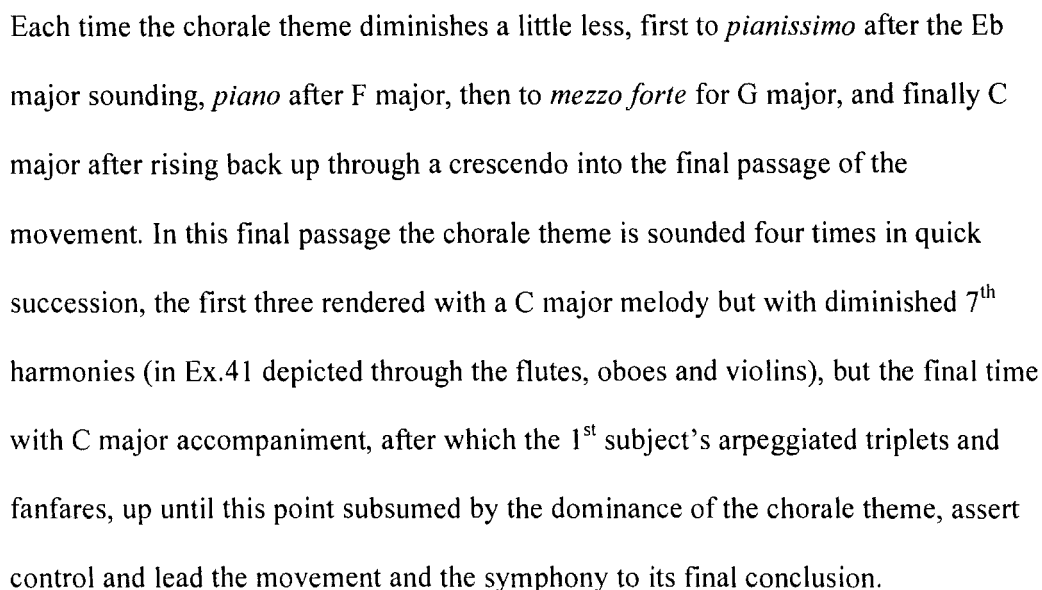
The development section opens at b.385 with an Eb major allusion to the 'Joy' theme from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the clarinets (Ex.39), a reference to the work whose influence on Schubert's own Ninth Symphony with its chorale finale is unmistakable.

Ex.39 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, clarinets b.385-92



Following this allusion is a thematic struggle between the 1<sup>st</sup> subject and the chorale theme as both simultaneously compete for dominance. However, the chorale theme in the wind section, with its melodic grace and artistic sincerity, unassumingly grasps the audience's attention ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject fanfare exchanges in the strings that in the exposition served as thematic material but in the development are instantly relegated to the level of accompaniment by the presence of the chorale theme. The brief contest for superiority is soon over and by b.433 all remnants of fanfares and triplets have been routed. What follows is a continuous extrapolation on the chorale theme and, at times, the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject. However, with the approaching return of the recapitulation the 1<sup>st</sup> subject material begins to re-assimilate itself back into the texture. The insidious return of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject starts with a single fanfare in the violins at b.560, a second at b.568 and from b.576 to the recapitulation at b.613 a gradual invasion of fanfares followed by the arpeggiated triplets. The recapitulation of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject, when it occurs, is not in its original C major, but the tonic minor, an element that will further increase the sense of arrival at the fulfilment of the chorale theme, such as it is. The recapitulation follows much the same series of events as the exposition, after the change back to the tonic major at b.689, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject bringing brief glimpses

Ex.40 Schubert's Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, oboes b.1049-1057



The musical score consists of two systems, each with three staves. The top staff in each system is for Flute, the middle for Oboe, and the bottom for Violin I. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The Flute and Oboe parts play a sustained, arpeggiated chordal texture with dynamic markings of *ff* and accents. The Violin I part plays a rhythmic, arpeggiated triplet pattern with dynamic markings of *ffz* and *p*. The score is divided into two systems of three staves each.

In the finale of his Ninth Symphony Schubert presents the clichéd language of the symphonic genre, the arpeggiated triplets and fanfare motif of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject, and, through the character and sincerity of the chorale theme, unveils the material for what it is: empty rhetoric. However, where Beethoven carefully prepared his chorale finale, fulfilled his preparation with a grand climax and then continued out beyond this triumphant moment, Schubert never achieves a satisfying declaration of his chorale theme. Even though in the recapitulation and coda the theme is heard several times and in the tonic key it is only ever a passing moment, a brief glimpse of a resplendent world just out of reach. Every appearance of the chorale theme, even in the coda of the finale, is undermined in some way, harmonically, dynamically, or simply chronologically so that it is never asserted, as Beethoven's 'Joy' theme was, in a blaze of glory. Instead Schubert creates the effect of an unfulfilled yearning, an all too

painful knowledge of something superior that remains beyond his grasp. By avoiding a climactic achievement of the long prepared and briefly viewed chorale finale, Schubert's Ninth Symphony concludes with an unfulfilled air, a sense of disappointment, almost a surprise that the work has ended without the expected splendid culmination. Nonetheless, the fragments of the chorale theme that are provided, the few precious moments of superior artistry, reinvest the rhetoric of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject, so cold and meaningless at the start of the movement, with a sense of purpose in the coda. Having revealed the soulless nature of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject's thematic material through comparison in the exposition, and then bested and replaced it in the development, in the coda the small victories that Schubert affords his audience with the chorale theme are accompanied by the fanfare and triplets of the previously dishevelled 1<sup>st</sup> subject. In other words, alone or in comparison to the chorale theme, the 1<sup>st</sup> subject is a bland and empty form of musical speech, but when supporting and celebrating the integrity and character of the chorale theme then its worth is confirmed. The use of the chorale theme in the finale of Schubert's Ninth Symphony is therefore to reinvest the rhetoric of fanfares and arpeggiated triplets with a significance, to provide it with a context from which it may once again speak with meaning.

Schumann's Second Symphony finale employs the chorale finale for an almost identical goal as Schubert's Ninth, albeit in a different manner. Where Schubert presented his chorale theme in glimpses throughout the movement that failed to achieve culmination, Schumann divides his movement into two halves, the first consisting of the empty rhetoric of the symphonic genre, and the latter the presentation and development of the chorale theme from humble beginnings to a



triumphant and climatic conclusion. These two halves are separated by a development section and as such will be described as the exposition and recapitulation sections of a sonata form, despite their thematic disparity.

The 1<sup>st</sup> subject of the finale of Schumann's Second Symphony embodies the rhetoric of the symphony. We can recognise the purposefully nondescript beginning to this movement in the dotted-crotchet rhythm that is relentlessly pursued without deviation across the whole orchestra for a monotonous forty bars (b.5-45) in an almost unfaltering C major, an opening tedium followed by a series of scales whizzing up and down. Schumann's 1<sup>st</sup> subject (Ex.42) is highly reminiscent of the equally bland 1<sup>st</sup> subject of the finale to Schubert's Ninth Symphony (Ex.33 and 34) in the basic triadic diatonicism and dotted rhythms of the thematic material, the dominance of four-square rhythms, and the spinning of empty scales that follow.

Ex.42 Schumann's Second Symphony, fourth movement, b.8-12



The emptiness of this material, evident on its own terms, is thrown into greater relief by its contrast with the previous movement. The *Adagio* is full of longing and sorrow, a sweet agony that Gerald Abraham describes as “the outstanding movement of the symphony...a mood picture in which [Schumann's] romantic melancholy finds poignant expression...[but it is] controlled and subjected to a classical discipline: consider the shape of the themes, the form, the texture and the consistency with which Schumann sustains one mood throughout the entire movement” (Abraham 1952: 224). That this affecting movement and its tender coda can be followed by the nondescript

clichés and crude symphonic mannerisms of the opening bars of the finale clearly illustrate the intentionally disingenuous nature of the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> movement.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> subject of the finale's exposition is, however, derived from the main theme of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement and as such provides a welcome element of melodic personality to the exposition, but is nonetheless dominated by the spiritless air of the movement thus far, an impression consolidated by the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject's return into a second transitional period and the reaffirmation of the whizzing C major scales in the contrabasses, cellos, violas, bassoons and clarinets that lead into a recall of the monotonous 1<sup>st</sup> subject for the close of the exposition. Schumann's development section deals purely with the material previously heard in the exposition and any artistic merit Schumann squeezes out of his 1<sup>st</sup> subject in the first half of the development is belied by the unremitting presence of repeated or arpeggiated triplets from b.134, the hallmark of both Schubert and Schumann's symphonic rhetoric. The development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject from b.191 provides some much needed character to proceedings and sees the immediate reduction of the triplets from a dominant force in the texture to the second violins and violas only. As the development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject progresses these triplets recede further into the texture as Schumann breaks down their rhythmic relentlessness. The development closes, or rather runs out of energy, at b.269-279 where, rather than have a definitive conclusion, the section merely grinds to a halt on constantly fading, four times repeated, C minor chord, as if Schumann can no longer bring himself to compose any further. The same impression was given in Schubert's Ninth Symphony finale where, before the arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject and its hints of the chorale theme, the exposition came to a complete halt. The empty measures between Schumann's development and recapitulation and Schubert's

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> subjects suggest the emptiness of the triplets and fanfares that they have been working in, now spent and requiring rejuvenation. Salvation comes for both Schubert and Schumann in the form of the chorale theme (Ex.43). In Schubert it was integrated in brief glimpses into his 2<sup>nd</sup> subject and later came to fruition, such as it was, in the coda. Schumann's symphonic finale, however, has been dominated thus far by the meaningless rhetoric of the symphonic genre and requires more than a brief glimpse of Elysium for redemption.

Ex.43 Schumann's Second Symphony, fourth movement, b.394



At b.280 we hear the first appearance of Schumann's finale chorale theme twice in Eb major then twice in G major. However, the attempted salvation is short lived as the developed material of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject swarms back to dominate the texture and recall the bland exchanges at b.299. But the chorale theme makes a modest return in the subdominant minor key at b.316 before an understated arrival in C major at b.324 leads the way. Once again, however, the 1<sup>st</sup> subject rhetoric creeps back in with the rising semi-quaver scale of the introduction at b.344, at first only twice, but at b.359 conquering the texture completely and threatening the eternal dominance of characterless and bland 1<sup>st</sup> subject. This originally introductory material builds and builds towards a grand climax of rhetoric, the pinnacle of which is the clichéd and theatrical effect of a dramatic pause on a tutti G major 7<sup>th</sup> chord at b.392-3 in preparation for the tonic and 1<sup>st</sup> subject recapitulation. But Schumann confounds the expectation of rhetorical fireworks with the *piano* arrival of the chorale theme in C major. This theme, allied closely to Beethoven through its simultaneous reference to

both the Ninth Symphony, through the employment of the chorale genre, and also a thematic allusion to Beethoven's song *Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder* from *An die ferne Geliebte*, a theme that, as we have seen, was also suggested in Schumann's C major *Fantasie*, will redeem Schumann's finale that, up until this point, has been dominated by facile and trite symphonic platitudes. Thus Schumann saves his symphony through Beethoven, and to a lesser extent Schubert (Ex.44). The chorale theme assumes control of the finale from b.394 onwards, moving through various keys and ever present at the fore of the texture, albeit a brief recapitulation of a theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement that introduces 3/2 counter-rhythm in the strings and provides a majestic stride into the ceremonial annunciation of the chorale theme.

Ex.44 Thematic comparison (all transposed into C major)

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a different theme, all transposed into C major. The first staff is Beethoven's 'Joy' theme in 8/8 time, featuring a series of eighth and quarter notes. The second staff is Schubert's chorale theme in 2/4 time, showing a simple, steady melody. The third staff is Beethoven's 'An die ferne Geliebte' in 2/4 time, with lyrics 'Nimm sie hin denn diese Lieder' written below the notes. The fourth staff is Schumann's chorale theme in 2/4 time, characterized by a slow, majestic pace with long note values.

The chorale theme is exchanged in canon between the woodwind and strings at b.474, then presented as a ceremonial march at b.493, before the last vestiges of the 3/2 counter-rhythm in the violas and cellos is righted at b.507 to provide the impression of a sudden increase in pace for a tutti *fortissimo* declaration of the chorale theme in C major until b.515. Following this grand statement Schumann lowers the tension, only to wind it tighter with a brief tonal preparation from b.516-36 for the definitive

statement of both the tonic key and chorale theme at b.537. Here the chorale theme reaches its ascendancy as the long prepared and expected climax of the movement. Introduced in the 'wrong' key of Eb major, digressing through the tangential interruptions from the rhetoric of the development section, brief allusions to previous movements, and the undermining of the theme through confused presentation have all delayed the moment that arrives at b.537 where finally the chorale theme is fulfilled and Schumann's symphony redeemed. Presented as a triumphant fanfare in a tutti *fortissimo* C major statement, Schumann even allows the recollection of the introductory semi-quaver scale and repeated triplets of the 1<sup>st</sup> subject. As with Schubert, the chorale theme has reinvested the previously meaningless and characterless rhetoric of the symphonic genre with purpose and significance: the fanfares and triplets can now celebrate the ceremonial exultation and satisfaction of the crowning triumph of the chorale theme as the saviour of Schumann's Second Symphony.

Beethoven's Ninth, Schubert's Ninth and Schumann's Second symphonies trace a lineage of symphonic finales that employ the chorale in a climactic manner. In each a fresh theme appears in the finale to conclude the work and each theme clearly derives from the chorale tradition as outlined above. The connections between these three themes are not merely an external similarity of genre and style, as a direct line of influence can be drawn from one to another. Schubert heard Beethoven's Ninth on its premiere while Schumann was well acquainted with both the 'Choral' and the 'Grand' symphonies, describing the former as "the true beginnings of Romanticism" and discovering the latter himself and then attending its premiere, a few days after which he started his own C major symphony. However, there are dissimilarities

between the three composers employment of the common generic trope of the chorale that stem from each composer's individual response to historicism. With his Ninth Symphony Beethoven was still driving forward, pushing limits of the genre that eventually entailed a leap outside of the genre to incorporate a choral finale. Schumann himself said that "after Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, greatest of all instrumental works in external proportions, form and intention seemed to have been exhausted" (Schumann in *MaNe*: 171). In this, Beethoven is at the forefront of historicism, striking out into the unknown with little consciousness of an antiquated past. Schubert and Schumann however, were part of the Romantic generation that, despite their proximity to Beethoven, was alive to the potentials of a forgotten 'Golden Age', a time that was perhaps superior to their own. In fact, the death of Beethoven, even perhaps the premiere of the Ninth symphony, could be regarded in some sense as the boundary of musical pre-historicism, as at this point, the culmination and Grand Opus of the master composer, who could claim to be able to strike out beyond Beethoven, to go further in the same direction? Instead, after Beethoven, composers were charged with the task of forging a new path, one that was founded upon Beethoven but led music out of the shadow of his great legacy. Music history reached an impasse with the death of Beethoven, to go further was inconceivable, his late works would be beyond the understanding of even the Romantic generation, and so a new direction was required. This very act entailed the realisation that Beethoven had surpassed any living composer and perhaps none has matched him since, and in doing so came the realisation that there was a past that was perhaps better, superior to their own. Schubert, the classicist, epitomised his longing for a return to this 'Golden Age' through the chorale finale of his Ninth symphony by its fragmentary and weakened nature. The theme is never established in any confident

form. Whereas in Beethoven and Schumann the theme is the grand climax, the crowning of the symphony in a triumphant blaze of glory or a striding sense of serene confidence, for Schubert the theme fades in and out, never glorious, never serene. It is almost as if Schubert is presenting his finale as a realisation of the unfavourable comparison his allusion to Beethoven's Ninth entails, his brief glimpses of a 'Golden Past' through the fragments of chorale theme alluding to a better time rapidly fading from view. For Beethoven the chorale theme is the living, burning present, the theme thrust forward to push the boundaries of the genre with its choral enactment, but for Schubert the chorale theme is a memory of the past, a faded reminiscence of the glory of Beethoven's Ninth that he heard premiered only two decades before the premiere performance of his own Ninth Symphony. This view of Schubert as a composer longing for a faded past, illustrated above in my analysis of the finale of his Ninth Symphony, is shared by Daverio and Burnham, both of whom directly compare Schubert and Beethoven's 'use' of time in much the same manner as discussed above.

Daverio states that

whereas Beethoven, especially in the symphonic works of his "heroic" phase, drives headlong from the present into the future, thus emulating the teleological thrust of drama, Schubert treats the present as a pretext for summoning up or mulling over the past, tending as he does toward epic breadth and lyric introspection (Daverio 2000: 605).

Burnham meanwhile communicates much the same thought in a more philosophical vein:

Music, we like to say, is about time. Whereas a Beethoven can seem to enlist time in a glorious ride to the future, Schubert makes us feel its irrevocable passing. We hear the sound of memory, the sound of mortality – and it is beautiful. For Schubert leads us to no Beethovenian vision of what could be, but finds us time and again in that hallowed, terrible places where we remember what we are (Burnham 2000: 663).

The 'Grand' Symphony chorale finale appears as Schubert's longing gaze backwards at Beethoven's flickering light as it disappears into the distance. Schubert's

compositional historicism, therefore, was embodied as a yearning for the past, a dissatisfaction with the present that could not be allayed, only illuminated through brief, isolated, and fading reminiscences, as encapsulated by the glimpses of his chorale theme in the finale of his Ninth Symphony.

In contrast, Schumann's Second Symphony chorale finale is, while not triumphant like Beethoven's, full of confidence and optimism. The theme is strong and boldly presented as a full symphonic projection of Schumann's hope for the future. It is the unashamed and glorious presentation of artistic spirit that Schumann takes from Beethoven, the use of talent to enhance genius that Schumann wanted to reclaim from Beethoven's 'Golden Age' so that he might reach further along the path he and his contemporaries were embarking upon, briefly slowed and threatened by the stifling of spirit by empty virtuosic craft, that they took after Beethoven's end. The poetic future Schumann envisioned was to be reached by calling upon Beethoven, the very composer who necessitated the envisioning of a future different to his own. Where Schubert longed for a return to Beethoven's bright flame Schumann lit his own torch from the master's and strode forward into the gloom. The achievement of a ceremonial and confident presentation of Schumann's chorale theme in his Second Symphony finale depicts the composer's historicism. Schumann is reinvigorating his symphony by calling upon the past masters of composition, the spiritually authentic figures of Bach, Beethoven and Schubert. As such, Schumann draws upon a past technique, the external form of the chorale theme, and uses it to infuse his finale, previously dominated by facile symphonic rhetoric, with his modern creative spirit. Schumann's Second Symphony finale thus unites 'craft' and 'spirit' through the compositional historicism of presenting an antiquated past style to communicate a unique and contemporary spirit.



The compositional historicism of Schumann is, as we have observed, based upon the duality of 'spirit' and 'craft' that characterised the composer's critical views on the artist and his work. There is, however, an underlying concept that informs the idea of 'talent' and 'genius' that contributes directly to a latent meaning in the chorale finale of Schumann's Second Symphony and also enlightens an appreciation of his choice of the oratorio genre to present his interpretation of Goethe's *Faust*. The crux of the relationship between the duality of 'spirit' and 'craft' and historicism is located in the spiritual poverty of the Romantic period due to the secularism of the Enlightenment. Thomas Albert Howard's fascinating study *Religion and the Rise of Historicism* reveals to us the process by which historical and philosophical thought of the Romantic period was in fact based upon theological models of thought and inquiry, especially that of Lutheran Protestantism. His theory may be directly applied to our discussion of the inter-relationship of historicism and 'spirit' and 'craft'.

Theology was regarded in pre-modern Europe as the greatest scientific endeavour to which the remaining sciences, such as philosophy and history, were branches of discovery toward the same goal: the unveiling of God. With the advent of the Enlightenment came the ascendancy of rational thought, science and reason over the faith and belief of the past. The security of belief of the pre-Enlightenment religious thought was assigned to antiquity with the havoc wreaked upon religious faith by the coming of humanism and the dominance of science. Even without comparing the relative merits and dominance of science and religion in the early nineteenth-century it is enough to observe that for a post-Enlightenment religious outlook a secondary explanation for the universe and man's position within it had irrevocably created the element of doubt in religious belief. The spiritual gulf left by

the sudden undercutting of all the certainties of the medieval world – the existence and protection of God and the eventual solace of Heaven – was replaced, for a time, by the certainties of science, such that it can offer. Scientific logic, however, could not support the nineteenth-century's desire for a transcendent meaning, a meaning that for many was to be found in art, as seen in Schubert's distressed diary entry of 1824: "O imagination! Man's greatest treasure, inexhaustible source of which both Art and Learning come to drink! O remain with us...so that we may be safe-guarded from so-called Enlightenment, that hideous skeleton without blood or flesh" (Schubert in Solomon *NcM* X: 14). With the passing of the Enlightenment came the advent of historicism, a major focus of which, as we have seen, was the longing for the time of what was seen as purer belief, exemplified in the music of Bach. This longing can perhaps be understood as a deeper desire for a return to a form of belief untroubled by the demands of empirical evidence and fact, an idea supported by the assertion that, unlike their father Abraham "whose religious feelings were aroused musically by the "natural religion" of Haydn oratorios", the Mendelssohn siblings found that "their religious feelings stirred more by the passions of Bach with their emphasis on human limitation and divine revelation" (Toews 1993: 732). What is emphasised in both Schubert's and the Mendelssohns' views is that their spirituality was stimulated by pre-Enlightenment values and music. The relative spiritual poverty felt by the Romantics accounts for the rise of historicism, as theorised by Howard. Thus the study of a past 'Golden Age' finds its beginnings in a spiritual yearning shaped by the dominance of science in the early-nineteenth-century. This nostalgia for an idealised bygone time that defines historicism is, as we have seen, closely related to the idea of the artistic poles of 'spirit' and 'craft' in Romantic thought as a cure for the dichotomy of the demand for originality in the employment of past musical styles.

Where we can transfer Howard's incisive views to this issue is by recognising 'spirit' as the Romantic plug for the void left by the Enlightenment. Human 'spirit', with its religious connotations and supernatural subtext can be seen as a direct replacement for untroubled Christian faith, especially as it was formulated by a scientific practice – philosophy. Therefore, even when Romantic artistic 'spirit' was invoked in a purely humanist manner, for example by Hegel, Howard's theory interprets it as an unconscious presentation of pre-Enlightenment theological thought in a secular age. The religious basis of the Romantic idea of human 'spirit' is exemplified in A.B. Marx's comment that

only a higher cultivation [*Bildung*] on the part of those receiving and those creating allows them to participate in the higher content that musical art is able to take up and then dispense from within the human spirit. Only this *spiritual content* indisputably elevates music to an art and to a benefactor of mankind. Without this spiritual side, music would be mere sensuous enjoyment, like that afforded by food, odours, the play of colour and lines in a kaleidoscope (Marx 1997: 22).

Or in E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the finale of which, in Hoffmann's words, "unfolds Beethoven's Romanticism, rising in a climax right to the end, more than any other of his works, and irresistibly sweeps the listener into the spirit realm of the infinite" (Hoffmann in *MaNe*: 147). The Romantics could not ignore the foundation of Enlightenment logic and reason and so formulated a fundamentally spiritual system of belief that claimed its foundations to be the domain of science, not religion. For Schumann, this spiritual reawakening can be inferred, not as a return to the incontestable authority of the church, but as a kind of hybrid form of humanism and divine inspiration in which man can raise himself, through his 'spirit', to the level of the artist. In this hybrid belief system the poles of Romantic 'craft' and 'spirit' relate almost exactly to Protestant views of man and the divine. For example, the theologians of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century "began to raise

questions about how one should interpret the Bible, given the fact that traditional canonical authority and divine inspiration had been called into question” (Howard 2000: 36) – this problem can be reduced to the question, is the Bible the word of God or does it *contain* the word of God? Being or containing is the exact same division as we made for ‘spirit’ and ‘craft’, the presentation of one by the other. Following this theory, Schumann’s dislike of the empty virtuosity of his contemporaries and his disdain at having to reveal the Schubertian fleshless skeleton of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* to defend it, can be understood as a reflection of Christian, and specifically orthodox Protestantism, “thorough pessimism concerning the things of this world” (Howard 2000: 139). To apply this theory directly to the chorale we can recognise evidence of the link between nineteenth-century historicism and the Romantic period’s desire for a spiritual revival in that “critics with a historical perspective deplored the quality of many chorales composed in the recent past. Both the texts and music were found to be irreligious, betraying evidences of Enlightenment rationalism and secularism” (Shapiro 1993: 123). The sudden disdain for secular influences on the chorale, a genre whose sacred foundations had been continually weakened since its inception in the early sixteenth century and especially so by Bach, the composer held by the Romantics as the embodiment of the sacred chorale, indicates a clear change of emphasis. Also, the views of these nineteenth-century critics of contemporary chorales bear a distinct relationship to Schubert’s terrible skeleton without blood or flesh - what they called ‘religious’, Schubert named ‘inspiration’ – a correlation that reveals that the chorale was a common link between the orthodox Protestant church and Schumann’s latent attempt to reinvest the Romantic generation with a sense of spirituality lost to the Enlightenment.

Nonetheless, the use of the chorale tradition in an irreligious context was a matter of contention for many Romantic critics. At its premiere, Mendelssohn's *St Paul* was criticised by many commentators for its use of the chorale in a distinctly secular work, the employment of "that element of Bach's choral music which most flagrantly, most irrefutably "pertained to divine worship"... The value of the chorale within its liturgical context, many argued, simply did not translate into value as entertainment in the concert hall" (Mercer-Taylor 1997: 211). These contemporary criticisms simultaneously support the compositional historicism credentials of the chorale in the nineteenth-century while failing to recognise the meaning of the chorale for Mendelssohn. What these critics failed to understand is that Mendelssohn employed the chorale exactly because it "pertained to divine worship" – he was invoking the Protestant congregation in the concert hall through the reminiscing of a religious 'Golden Age' as represented by the Bachian chorale. By reversing the balance of secular song influencing a devotional genre performed in a sacred context of the church, to a sacred genre influencing the secular symphony in the secular context of the concert hall, Mendelssohn was disseminating pre-Enlightenment spirituality into the new arena of worship – the concert hall. This ties exactly with Howard's view of the influence of religious belief on historicism as here we see Mendelssohn's longing for the untroubled spirituality of the pre-Enlightenment combined with a yearning for the communal expression of devotion of the traditional Protestant service – through *St Paul*, Mendelssohn transferred this desire and reinvented spirituality in the concert hall as the location of devotion, the artist as a priest-like holder of spirituality (in the context of transcendent 'spirit' and earthly 'craft'), and his art as the manifestation of faith. The critics of Mendelssohn's use of the chorale in *St Paul* were correct, the value of the chorale in a liturgical context did

not translate into mere entertainment, but neither was this Mendelssohn's intention as the composer employed the chorale genre for both its secular and sacred power: "historically, and in the historical imagination of the nineteenth-century, the chorale resonated with equal strength in the church and in the forest, in the school, at the workbench, and in the home...In whatever form or context it appeared, the chorale made a powerful religious, cultural, and musical statement" (Stanley 1987: 140). In this light, Schumann's emulation of Bach, Beethoven and Schubert through the use of the chorale in his Second Symphony is not only a call to reinstate 'spirit' as the focus of modern music, but also a displaced longing for the comfort of an untroubled spiritual simplicity, a cultural faith unsullied by the concerns of science and reason, the hallmark of which is the domination of divine 'spirit' over mortal 'craft'. This may be seen as Schumann's secondary goal in the chorale finale of his Second Symphony, excepting that rather than reinstate Christian dogma as the arbitrator of spirit he instead advocates a humanistic religion, one founded on historicism whereby the key figures of musical history were those possessing 'spirit', an element sadly lacking in his modern present. Thus Schumann invoked whom he saw as the spiritual figureheads of music – Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert – in his Second Symphony as exemplars of past artistic spiritual authenticity. However, where Schumann incorporates a single generic tendency, in the form of the chorale, into his Second Symphony as a compositionally historicist expression of a longing for a past spiritual 'Golden Age', in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* Schumann employs the entire generic tradition of the oratorio, an antiquated secular genre in itself, and subsumes beneath the oratorio's generic breadth a variety of antique forms, styles and techniques of musical composition to express this same religious longing on a far broader and more personalised scale. This idea comes to fruition in the composer's setting of Goethe's

*Chorus mysticus*, the final verse of the entire *Faust* tragedy, in which Goethe and Schumann's theological views are expressed through purposefully antediluvian literary and musical crafts to instil their modern spiritual communication with the spiritual gravity and authenticity afforded by external forms of ancient design.

### **Historicism and *Scenes from Goethe's Faust***

The oratorio, in exactly the same way as the chorale but on a grander scale, represented for the nineteenth-century a 'Golden Age' of the past, a historicism that was founded on a dissatisfaction with the spiritual poverty of the present. To illustrate this I shall firstly draw a brief history of the oratorio tradition and also portray the opinion of the nineteenth-century toward the genre. Secondly I will underline the religious modes of thought associated with this historicism in the context of the oratorio before revealing these sentiments in an exploration Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* through an analysis of the fugal introduction to the composer's *Chorus mysticus*. We shall see how Schumann's compositional historicism of the Second Symphony was concentrated within *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as a communication of Schumann's own philosophical and theological beliefs, thus fulfilling a further aspect of the Grand Opus.

The genre of the oratorio stems from an organisation named the Congregazione dell'Oratorio founded by Filippo Neri (1515-95) in the 1550s in Rome. Neri founded the society for his friends and close followers to come together for spiritual exercises and sing spiritual *laude* for entertainment. Indeed, entertainment was a large part of this congregation as one of the motivations of Neri was "to win the idle youth of the city to religious observance through an appreciation of music...[and was] essentially a popular movement" (Dean 1959: 6). Soon, however, their numbers swelled to such a

degree that a prayer hall, or oratory (the word oratorio was not broadened to incorporate a musical composition in Italy until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century around 1640), was built above the nave of the church of S Girolamo della Carità to accommodate the large crowds drawn by the entertaining services. As such we can appreciate that from its very beginnings the oratorio genre was a communal act of devotion founded on a populist sense of spiritual entertainment. Over the following two centuries the oratorio was distracted further and further from its sacred roots by the influence of secular entertainment. Opera, especially, was a major element in corrupting this religious genre as eventually even the few distinctions as to what constituted an oratorio – an unstaged vocal piece based on sacred text – were gradually eroded. Entertainment became more and more the focus at the expense of religious observance with the move from church performances to the secular contexts of palaces and concert halls. In 1826 Lichtenthal saw fit to define the oratorio in his musical dictionary *Dizionario e bibliografia della musica* as “either a staged or an unstaged work” (Lichtenthal in Smither 1987: 6) and included this originally sacred genre under the general heading, and as a species of, opera. Thus the oratorio tradition had, by the mid-nineteenth-century, burst the boundaries of a sacred genre to become an overarching cultural form of expression. The cultural significance, as opposed to religious function, of the nineteenth-century oratorio can be observed most clearly in the Germany oratorio tradition. Smither<sup>15</sup> informs us that there are “two points of basic importance to an understanding of the cultural and social context of nineteenth-century German oratorio: the secularisation of nineteenth-century society and the concert function of the genre” (Smither 2000: 20). Glenn Stanley meanwhile offers a historical setting to the importance of the oratorio to the German culture of this era:

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<sup>15</sup> See Smither (2000) for a detailed review of the nineteenth-century German oratorio and its social and cultural context.



After years of decline, the German oratorio flourished in the period following 1814, when Germany regained its political sovereignty after years of subjugation by Napoleonic France...notwithstanding their awareness of its Italian origin, German writers on music regarded the oratorio as a quintessentially German genre with serious religious character and elevated music style that embodied the national spirit. These qualities made the oratorio an excellent medium for the inculcation of religious and patriotic conviction, the task given to art by many writers on culture concerned with rebuilding Germany after the Napoleonic era (Stanley 1987: 122).

Thus the oratorio for early nineteenth-century German was a recollection of a sovereign German past, part of which was religious, as well as the spiritual purity associated with the pre-Enlightenment period, and as such the composition of a German oratorio in the early-nineteenth-century was an expression of compositional historicism. Szabó-Knotik supports this view with the observation that

the role of oratorios in nineteenth-century cultural life was generally characterized by the fact that, while there were few new works written, regular performances were important within the rites of bourgeois festivities. This means that if oratorios were not so important within the development of new music, they had a fundamental role in the canon of increasingly venerated musical tradition (Szabó-Knotik in *19cM Conf.*: 176).

Even the modern oratorios that were composed were affected by the historical slant of the genre by calling upon historical subjects and presenting them in purposefully antiquated styles. We shall observe later Schumann's use of Bach in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, but also of note is Liszt's *The Legend of St Elizabeth* (1857) that was intended, in part, to reinvigorate Hungarian nationalism through a recollection of historically important events of the nation. Liszt based his oratorio on motifs he had adapted from nine historical figures of Catholic and/or Hungarian extraction (five clergymen, a composer, two musicians and a librarian) and in doing so combined religious music and folklore, "both of which embody traditional elements corresponding in Liszt to the generally prevailing historicist trends" (Szabó-Knotik in *19cM Conf.*: 176).

In sum, we can observe that the oratorio, much like the chorale, originated as a method of communal religious expression but by the nineteenth-century had been gradually altered by secular influences into a genre of cultural entertainment with religious overtones. An important consideration in this matter, as made by Shapiro in the context of Handel's eighteenth century English oratorios, is that

in the early eighteenth century, distinct musical styles and practices were still identified and understood according to their social roles and emotional affects. Contemporaries readily asserted that musical styles and techniques used in the theatre retained the immoral associations and affects of such a venue when transferred to a new context. By the same token, the church music style could retain its spiritual hold on the passions when introduced outside the domain of the church service (Shapiro 1987: 226).

The connection between Kallberg's "generic contract" and the compositional historicism of Garratt is, again, clear. Here the connotations of the oratorio in eighteenth century England, but no less in nineteenth-century Germany, are of a religious aura, no matter the context of the genre. Thus the compositional historicism of the oratorio genre in nineteenth-century Germany was the evocation of an idealised cultural and spiritual Germanic culture that pre-dated the rule of Napoleonic France. This historicism, again linked strongly with religious belief and spiritual authenticity through the obvious connections of the oratorio to the sacred, contains a strange reversal in the relationship between the sacred and secular in the oratorio tradition. Previously we noted the gradual influence of secular opera on the decreasingly sacred oratorio tradition following on from its roots as a populist communal expression of religious devotion, much in the same way as the chorale came to be dominated by folk song by the time of Bach's arrangements. However, with the newfound historicism of the nineteenth-century this relationship was inverted. As noted, the spiritual historicism of Schumann, through its relation to his critical beliefs of 'spirit' and 'craft', was founded upon a longing for the spiritual purity of pre-Enlightenment

religion. In this context we can observe Schumann's employment of the traditions of past ages as a sanctification of secular genres, an attempt to spiritualise the concert hall and thus create an arena for communal acts of devotion to art and the artist. Therefore, rather than the gradual secularisation of the oratorio by opera in the pre-Enlightenment period, we see in Schumann and his contemporaries the consecration of the symphony through the chorale, and to a greater extent, the sanctification of the concert hall by the oratorio as a temple of German culture.

The argument that Schumann was expressing a latent desire for religious security via his compositional historicism of Bach and the baroque through the chorale and oratorio is based on the assertion that we "remain unaware of the full extent to which characteristic concepts and patterns of...[nineteenth-century] philosophy and literature are a displaced and reconstituted theology, or else a secularized form of devotional experience" (Howard 2000: 4). Just as the chorale had, by the nineteenth-century, become a confusion of sacred history and connotation communicated by a secular based technique, so too the oratorio was a ceremonial sacred genre focussed on themes of redemption expressed through operatic means in a secular context. The religious semantics and tradition of the oratorio were somewhat at odds with its increasingly worldly appearance and concerns. This confusion was no better expressed than at the 1829 performance of *St Mathew's Passion*: the historical revival in a secular concert hall for the purposes of entertainment of a grand religious artwork expressing devotion to God. Also, just as previously we observed the shift in emphasis in the tradition of the oratorio from a sacred genre influenced by secular methods to a secular form infused with spirituality through antiquated religious connections, so too can the Bach revival be expressed in the manner of a religious appropriation of a secular tradition:

The artwork universalised the particular confessional form, transforming the church congregation into a more inclusive cultural community. Although the *St Mathew Passion* was performed in a neoclassical temple of art by lay musicians at a benefit concert for a ticket-holding, paying audience, both Fanny and Felix thought that the music had transformed the attendees of a secular concert into participants in a sacred service (Toews 1993: 736).

In view of the Mendelssohns' appropriation of the concert hall for religious service, what is the emphasis of sacred and secular within Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*? Goethe's original play is in no way a liturgically sacred work, but it is a remarkably spiritual one calling, as it does, upon the traditions and faith of the Protestant church in some scenes and contrasting them with a variety of pagan myths and legends from diverse sources in the next. The ambiguous assertion, even undermining, of certain fundamental Christian beliefs, such as the infallibility of God and His intrinsic opposition to the Devil, are nonetheless preceded by the affirmation of the existence of these figures. Indeed, the work Schumann chose to set in his oratorio seems to embody the very confusion and uncertainty surrounding religious belief in the wake of the Enlightenment and yet simultaneously affirm the underlying yearning for an undogmatic belief system in which man may be more than his mortal self, an idea acted out in the final scene of Schumann's oratorio as Faust's soul transcends to paradise through the most overtly neo-baroque and antiquated sacred section of the work.

Before we explore Part Three of Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, it will suit us here to recapitulate the various themes and ideas that have led us to this moment, prefaced by an observation from Howard of great relevance to the overall discussion in hand. Howard informs us of the antagonistic and complex relationship between historical scholarship and religious meaning in the modern period: "historical scholarship seeks to explain the world critically; faith seeks to behold the world

devotionally...they often remain muddled in human consciousness, claiming authority to the same dimension of human existence: the experience of time and the attendant desire to interpret one's experience as meaningful" (Howard 2000: 141).

The historicism of the Romantic period, and specifically that of Schumann's, was founded on a concept of two polar extremes in art: 'spirit' and 'craft'. An artist may employ historical craft, but only in the name of a modern spirit. The idea of spirit, a supernatural and yet humanist concept, was itself founded on the religious beliefs of man and the divine, separated from the dogma of sacred institutions by the rational and secular age and applied to the scientific creed of philosophy. Thus Schumann's compositional historicism was on one level an attempt to refocus the contemporary symphony as an expression of artistic spirit, as exemplified in the symphonic finales of Beethoven and Schubert, but on a secondary level was also an endeavour to re-establish spirituality in the modern scientific world with the concert hall as the place of worship, the concert as the communal act of devotion, the audience as the congregation, and the artist as the holy man and possessor of divine spirit. The 'muddled' consciousness of Schumann's transcendent genius and earth bound talent, the competing and yet symbiotic relationship of 'spirit' and 'craft' in Schumann's conception of the Romantic artist, was expressed clearly in his Second Symphony and further still in *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as compositional beacons of a fresh, historical, and yet forward-thinking, poetic future. Schumann's compositional historicism, his reinvigoration of the present through the techniques of the past, was a displaced expression of spiritual longing for certainty and sincerity that had deserted his generation.

Whereas with the chorale and the oratorio genres we observed Schumann investing modern secular practices with the 'spirit' of antiquated religious observance, in the last scene of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, and the *Chorus mysticus* especially, Schumann is directly communicating the philosophical and theological views shared by himself and Goethe through a purposefully archaic form of musical expression. Schumann employs a broad range of religious genres in his secular oratorio including allusions to the hymn, chorale, sacred aria, Handelian oratorio chorus, and the antiquated manner of Palestrina's sacred style<sup>16</sup>. Thus Schumann's modern spirit, his desire for a secularised transcendent spirituality, is expressed through an ancient 'craft' that represented, for Schumann, a superior past of unadulterated religious belief. This final culmination of both *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* and Schumann's historicism will be explored through an analysis of the fugal introduction to the *Chorus mysticus* – its poetic content and relation to both antique and nineteenth-century musical practice.

Schumann's Scene 7, *Transfiguration of Faust* traces a progression of gradual spiritual improvement as Faust's soul ascends to Heaven, culminating in the *Chorus mysticus*. Daverio summarises Schumann's approach to this scene:

According to Christian lore, each of the Anchorite Fathers, Patres Ecstaticus, Profundus, Seraphicus, and Marianus, represents an ascending degree of divine knowledge... To be sure, ascent in no more than a metaphor for increasing sanctity or purification, a conceit that Schumann figures musically through a turn from profane to sacred music genres. The operatic tone of the opening monologue for Pater Profundus is therefore displaced by the simple hymnic quality of the closing music for Pater Seraphicus and the Blessed Boys, the purity of the latter further emphasised by its almost total diatonicism (Daverio 1997: 379-80).

Therefore we see Schumann gradually discarding secular music genres for sacred ones as Faust's soul approaches paradise. It is notable however, that there appears to

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<sup>16</sup> This form of historicism was prefigured by Mendelssohn's *St Paul* which also utilized explicitly religious genres in his oratorio, a matter explored further by Stanley (1987), Mercer-Taylor (1997), and Garratt (2004).

be a third tier of religious purity beyond the merely secular and sacred: the antiquated sacred genre. Thus the pure diatonicism observed by Daverio for the Blessed Boys in no.3 of Scene 7 is surpassed by the Blessed Boys of no.4 of Scene 7 rendered in a conscious imitation of Palestrina's sacred style<sup>17</sup>. The purification process of Faust's soul reaches its highest and purest level at the climax of the play and oratorio in Goethe's *Chorus mysticus*, illustrated by Schumann through the antique fugue updated with a modern harmonic vocabulary, a section that will be analysed below. Goethe's *Chorus mysticus* has aroused some discussion as to its meaning and its context. Below are three translations to illustrate the ambiguity of the original:

Goethe's Chorus Mysticus

Alles Vergängliche  
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;  
Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereignis;  
Das Unbeschreibliche,  
Hier ist es getan;  
Das ewigweibliche  
Zieht uns hinan.

Translated by Louis MacNeice  
and E.L. Stahl

*All that is past of us  
Was but reflected;  
All that was lost in us  
Here is corrected;  
All indescribables  
Here we descry;  
Eternal Womanhead  
Leads us on high.*

Translated by John Daverio

*All that is transitory  
Is only an allegory;  
Here the inaccessible  
Becomes actuality;  
Here the indescribable  
Is accomplished;  
The Eternally-feminine  
Draws us forward.*

Translated by George

*Madison Priest  
All earth comprises  
Is symbol alone;  
What there ne'er suffices  
As fact here is known;  
All past the humanly  
Wrought here in love;  
The Eternal-Womanly  
Draws us above.*

What is clear is that Goethe avoids any direct reference to God or Heaven with only a passing allusion to the Virgin Mother as any form of Christian imagery for this, the climax of his *Faust*. Instead there is a general and seemingly pantheistic, or at least indiscriminate, belief in the redemptive power of transcendence above the concerns of

<sup>17</sup> Palestrina's credentials as a representative of religious historicism has been well covered by James Garratt in his book *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-century Music*.

earthly life, an attempt to “give utterance to something that admits to neither logic nor determinate meaning: the ultimate mystery of transcendence” (Daverio 1997: 379).

The final two scenes provide what appears to be an incongruent close to Goethe’s grand play, as the previously secular and humanist *Faust* is concluded with a distinctly religious finale with a host of Protestant imagery and figures. However, Goethe distanced himself from a literal interpretation of this overtly Christian imagery:

You will confess that the conclusion, where the redeemed soul is carried up, was difficult to manage; and that, amid such supersensual matters about which we scarcely have even an intimation, I might easily have lost myself in the vague – if I had not, by means of sharply-drawn figures, and images from the Christian Church, given my poetical design a desirable form and substance (Eckermann in Moorhead 1930: 413-4).

In this manner Goethe himself is indulging in historicism as he employs the ancient figures of the Anchorite Fathers and the Virgin Mary to articulate his own modern theological views, despite their disparity with the methods he employs to communicate them. What is important is that the Christian images and figures of Goethe’s concluding scenes communicate an ancient depth of spirituality that, in Goethe’s words, give his “poetical design a desirable form and substance”. In exactly the same manner, Schumann employs ancient sacred musical genres to communicate this same depth, although the external form of these antiquated crafts do not reflect the internal content of the music and philosophy. This process reaches a climax for Schumann in the *Chorus mysticus* where Goethe’s spiritual message is most clearly a modern and secularised view of religion that Schumann illustrates through the most ancient of musical techniques, albeit with 19<sup>th</sup> century renovations. This embodies historicism as because the external forms of contemporary styles are inadequate for his goals, Schumann employs antiquated external forms to communicate a modern



spirit. Simultaneously this act embodies Schumann's latent longing for the spiritual purity of the past as he instantly infuses Goethe's modern transcendence philosophy with an ancient pedigree by virtue of its historical presentation. I shall now analyse the introductory fugue to Schumann's *Chorus mysticus*<sup>18</sup>, no.7 of Scene 7, as an example of the compositional historicism of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*.

Schumann divides Goethe's *Chorus mysticus*, the last verse of the author's play, into four poetic groups of two lines each. The exposition sets only the first poetic group of Goethe's *Chorus mysticus* text "All that is past of us/ Was but reflected" while the greater succeeding portion contains the remaining three. The second point of imitation is split into two halves, the first eleven bars long dealing with the emergence of the second poetic group "All that was lost in us/ Here is corrected" from beneath the opening lines of "All that is past of us/ Was but reflected" while the remaining thirteen bars introduce a new development of the fugal subject for the lines "All indescribables/ Here we descry" before the final phrase of Goethe's *Faust*, "Eternal Womanhead/ Leads us on high", emerges from beneath.

The fugal introduction to the *Chorus mysticus* opens with the subject, characterised by its two sets of open fifths in the altos and basses of both choirs<sup>19</sup> (Ex.45).

Ex.45 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 7 no.7 (*Chorus mysticus*), b.1-2

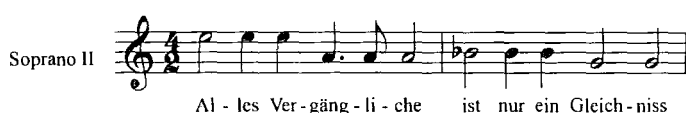


<sup>18</sup> We shall be exploring the second of two versions of the *Chorus mysticus* composed by Schumann because he himself regarded the second as more successful, and also the later version places a greater emphasis on sacred rather than secular stylistic traits.

<sup>19</sup> Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* Scene 7 has two choirs. To differentiate, soprano II refers to the sopranos of the second choir. Likewise, tenor I designates the tenors of the first choir.

Starting on A, the first sounding of the subject outlines the tonality of A minor, a tonic reinforced by the stretto answer starting at the fifth of the subject on E in soprano II (Ex.46). However, the tonality is confused by a *second* answer before the completion of the subject, a stretto answer that is heard in tenor I at the sixth degree on F. The first answer in soprano II has its second half modified to conform with this new entry, the second fifth of its thematic shape rising only a semitone from the first and then falling only a minor third to G before rising again to A.

Ex.46 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 7 no.7 (*Chorus mysticus*), b.2-3



over the G bass to C major 7<sup>th</sup> second inversion, then A minor 7<sup>th</sup> moving to F major first inversion over the A bass note, to a Bb major chord followed by a strong G major 7<sup>th</sup> first inversion that rises a further step to pause upon C major. Therefore an A minor tonality, asserted in the first sounding of the subject and answer but undermined by the accompanying harmony, is followed by an F major tonality from the F major chord of b.2 that is diverted suddenly by the G major 7<sup>th</sup> of b.4 onto a C major conclusion. The answer to this confusion of fugal elements and harmonic accompaniment lies in a typical Schumann, but wholly un-fugal, device: the first two and a half bars of the *Chorus mysticus* is a false entry. In a purposeful confusion of tonality, Schumann presents a detached and mysterious opening, suitably unnatural and ghostly for a presentation of the lines “All that is past of us,/ Was but reflected”. The actual tonality of the section is F major, found in b.2, although these opening bars conclude on the dominant, while the true subject of the fugue is not that heard at the start of number, but what appears to be a second answer in tenor I of b.2. The view of the opening theme as a false subject is reinforced by the fact that a second answer on the 6<sup>th</sup> degree in the exposition of a fugue is, in the context of traditional, bad fugal practice as it undermines the role of the exposition in outlining the tonality of the fugue, while the true subject in tenor I is followed by the true stretto answer in the dominant at b.3 in the soprano I simultaneously with the countersubject in the basses of choirs I and II (Ex.47).

Ex.47 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 7 no.7 (*Chorus mysticus*), Soprano I, Tenor I, Bass I and II b.2-5

[answer]  
Soprano I  
Al - les Ver gäng - li - che ist nur ein Gleich - niss

[subject]  
Tenor I  
Al - les Ver - gäng - li - che ist nur ein Gleich - niss, ist nur ein Gleich - niss

[countersubject]  
Bass I and II  
Al - les Ver - gäng - li - che ist nur ein Gleich - niss

Also, further appearances of the subject are overwhelmingly either on F or C, the true subject and answer of b.2 and b.4. Thus Schumann confounds traditional fugal practice with a false start and a weakly projected tonic, only to affirm the fugue in a fairly standard fugal exposition from the second half of b.2 onwards, closing the exposition on the dominant. If the *Chorus mysticus* began at the F chord of the second bar then what would be left would be a typical fugal exposition with a tonic subject, followed in stretto by a dominant answer simultaneously with a countersubject (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. *Chorus mysticus* opening fugue, b.1-5

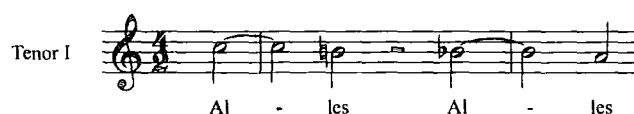
Bar	1	2	3	4	5
Soprano I				A.	
Alto I	F.S.				
Tenor I		S.			
Bass I	F.S.			C.S.	
Soprano II		F.A.			
Alto II	F.S.				
Tenor II					
Bass II	F.S.			C.S.	
Orchestral harmony	F	Dm 6th	E F	Gm - C7 Am - F	Bb G7 C

S. - Subject  
A. - Answer  
C.S. - Countersubject  
F.S. - False Subject  
F.A. - False Answer

\* Diagram does not show free fugal entries from b.4 to 5.

Following this unorthodox fugal exposition, Schumann begins the second part of his introduction to the *Chorus mysticus* with a second point of imitation beginning, as may be expected, with the fugal answer, rather than the subject, in alto I. The answer in the dominant, C major, is immediately joined by the countersubject in bass II, transposed up a minor third to C and extending the chromatic scale up a perfect fourth to F, and a second countersubject in tenor I, a sighing chromatic motif on “Alles, Alles”. As this second countersubject appears only in the first half of the second point of imitation, only to the words “Alles, Alles”, and because it is of limited thematic means, it would perhaps be more accurate to consider this new phrase as an episodic motif rather than a full fugal countersubject (Ex.48).

Ex.48 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 7 no.7 (*Chorus mysticus*), Tenor I b.5-7



The first lines of Goethe's *Chorus mysticus* “All that is past of us/ Was but reflected” continues to be asserted in the second point of imitation in the answer of the alto I that opens the restatement and the “Alles, Alles” of the episodic motif noted above. However, the countersubject sets the second two lines of the *Chorus mysticus* verse, “All that was lost in us/ Here is corrected”, lines that although immediately subsumed in the texture by the subject and answer, will grow in authority until their culmination at b.14. The second poetic group originates in bass II and is passed, through overlapping statements of the transposed and extended countersubject, through alto II to bass II before bass I takes up the words at b.12 but with an inverted and slightly modified version of the fugal answer. These overlapping countersubject statements are originally overshadowed by the subject and its answer, passed continuously in

stretto from the answer that opens the second point of imitation in alto I to the subject sounded in bass I and then soprano II, then assumed as a subject inversion in soprano I (albeit with a slight modification that introduces the forbidden tritone interval of the *stile antico*) in combination with a stretto answer in alto II. However, the succession of the second poetic group of “All that was lost in us/ Here is corrected” from the material of the countersubject, a theme that is used for the second poetic group alone until b.22, to that of the subject, albeit in the modified form of the inverted answer, signals the growing power of this poetic group, a sensation of imminent arrival reinforced by the simultaneous start of a dominant pedal in bass II and contrabasses. This growth achieves dominance at b.14 with simultaneous presentations of the second poetic group in the whole of choir I through the inverted countersubject in bass I, countersubject in tenor I, the answer in its dominant, G major, in soprano I with a stretto C major response in alto I. The second poetic group of the *Chorus mysticus* has almost literally become the subject of the fugue at b.14 as the principle text of the vocal texture with both the answer and its dominant in the upper voices of choir I and the standard and inverted versions of the countersubject in the lower voices (Ex.49).

Ex.49 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 7 no.7 (*Chorus mysticus*), Choir I b.13-16

Soprano I

Alto I

Tenor I

Bass I

das Un-zu-läng-li-che hier wird's Er-eig-niss;

das Un-zu-läng-li-che hier wird's Er-eig-niss;

das Un-zu-läng-li-che hier wird's Er-eig-niss;

Er-eig-niss, das Un-zu-läng-li-che, hier wird's Er-eig-niss;

After this statement of the second poetic group Schumann continues to increase the harmonic tension with contrary motion as tenor I, joined by the flutes, continues its extended chromatically ascending countersubject against the continued chromatic descent of the greatly extended countersubject inversion in bass II, 2<sup>nd</sup> bassoon, cellos and contrabasses while the tenor II and tenor trombones exchange the fugal subject on the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree with the stretto response of soprano II on the 6<sup>th</sup> degree. This harmonic motion and tension resolves itself with the relative stability of a Bb major chord at b.18 that signals the close of the first half of the second point of imitation. The start of the second section of the second point of imitation at b.18 is indicated by the sudden textural dominance of the third poetic group ("All indescribables/ Here we descry") with a newly heard development of the fugal theme and the harmonic preparation of the achievement of the tonic of F major. The fugal subject development moves in regular stretto from bass I, to bass II, to tenor II, to tenor I rising a third each time through D, F, A and C as the 1<sup>st</sup> clarinet, cellos and contrabasses trace an ascending diatonic F major scale of an octave and a tone to culminate on a C major pedal at fig.A. The arrival of the dominant pedal in tenor II, bass II, 2<sup>nd</sup> horn, trumpets, timpani, cellos and basses at fig.A signals the start of the fourth poetic group of Goethe's *Chorus mysticus* with "Eternal Womanhead/ Leads us on high" and the climax of the fugal introduction to Schumann's *Chorus mysticus*. Here, as with the climax of "All that is past of us/ Was but reflected" in the first half of the second point of imitation, Schumann creates tension with contrary chromatic motion as the greatly extended countersubject in soprano I and II, 1<sup>st</sup> flute, 1<sup>st</sup> oboe, 1<sup>st</sup> clarinet and 1<sup>st</sup> bassoon contrasts and clashes with the dominant pedal noted above and the inverted and extended countersubject of bass I and the C major answer in alto I. At b.24 this grand harmonic crescendo and climax of the introduction is suddenly undercut by a

piano dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord on C for the emergence of the fourth poetic group, previously covered by the continuing third group and the matted complexity of the fugal texture at fig.A, as the hovering and translucently dominant text (Ex.50).

Ex. 50 Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 7 no. 7 (*Chorus mysticus*), b.21-26

The musical score for Ex. 50, Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, Scene 7 no. 7 (*Chorus mysticus*), measures 21-26. The score is for Soprano I, Alto I, Tenor I, Bass I, Soprano II, Alto II, Tenor II, Bass II, and Piano. It features a fugal texture with a piano introduction. The lyrics are in German. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'cresc.' and 'dim.'.

**Soprano I:** das E - wig - Weib - li - che zieht uns hin - an.

**Alto I:** das Un-beschreibli-che, hier ist es ge-than, das E - wig - Weib - li - che zieht uns hin - an.

**Tenor I:** hier ist es ge-than, hier ist es ge - than; das E - wig - Weib - li - che zieht uns hin - an.

**Bass I:** ge - than, das Un - be - schreib - li - che, hier ist es ge - than; das E - wig - Weib - li - che zieht uns hin - an.

**Soprano II:** ge - than, hier ist es ge - than, hier ist es ge - than

**Alto II:** das E - wig - Weib - li - che zieht uns hin - an.

**Tenor II:** ge - than, das E - wig - Weib - li - che zieht uns hin - an.

**Bass II:** ge - than, das E - wig - Weib - li - che zieht uns hin - an.

**Piano:** The piano part features a fugal texture with a piano introduction. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'cresc.' and 'dim.'.

The fugal introduction to the *Chorus mysticus* is concluded with a brief linking passage for four soloists and woodwind that introduce the modern sounding thirds, in comparison to the fourths and fifths that dominated the previous fugal material, of the solo sopranos, clarinets and bassoons. This four bar coda continues the dominant 7<sup>th</sup>



chord on C of the fugal introduction before the main body of the *Chorus mysticus* opens with the long delayed and anticipated F major tonic.

The choral fugue introduction to Schumann's setting of the *Chorus mysticus* is compositional historicism incarnate. The employment of the fugue, representative of a spiritually superior time through its antiquated nature, is modernised via a distinctly untraditional false start and harmonic chromaticisms and complexities of the nineteenth-century. In concluding his oratorio, a genre that itself embodies the historicism of the nineteenth-century, with an antique fugue updated with a contemporary harmonic style, Schumann portrays the *Chorus mysticus* as the climax of both his "New Way" in its mastery of counterpoint, itself an expression of historicism, and also his compositional historicism through the use of an antiquated craft to communicate a modern spirit. Underlying this historicism is, as we have seen, Schumann's latent longing for spiritual fulfilment, a desire satisfied by Goethe's transcendent culmination of *Faust*, making the closing scene of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* the presentation of Schumann's personal philosophical and theological beliefs through a poetic source – an integral element of the Grand Opus.

This thesis has observed the manner in which the early concerns of Schumann's career – generic, extra-musical, philosophical and theological – were manifested and developed in his *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* as a climax and culmination of what had preceded, the capstone to a artistic career. As such, Schumann's oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* may be considered as the composer's Grand Opus.

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